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The Girl and a Million;

Or, THE CROOKED LEGISLATOR. By ALFRED B. TOZER

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CHAPTER IV.

COUNTING CHANCES.

BACK at Harlan, Duke had little difficulty in reaching a definite conclusion concerning the disgraceful affair at the restaurant. On the day following the occurrence, the **Morning Star,** the rival newspaper, had printed a distorted account of the ejectment of the party, without, however, mentioning the names of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence. The writer held up Duke as the host of the evening, and inferred that all the members of the party were of questionable character.

That part of the story which referred to Miss Hilton angered Duke most. It was stated that the charge made against her by the restaurant owner had never been investigated or disproved in any way. It was even hinted that a search of her clothing might have led to the recovery of the missing silver.

All this could come from only one source. Senator May must have supplied the writer with the twisted facts from which the story had been written. Duke was at first at a loss to account for the name of Miss Hilton in the article, then he remembered that it had been mentioned in the presence of the officers, and that one of them had insisted that it was one of the aliases of Nell Garlow. This proved to the young man that May had talked with the officers after the meeting in the street. Where was the malice of the man to end?

Duke's first impulse was to make it a personal matter with May and the editor of the **Star,** with whom he had never been on good terms, but reflection convinced him that such a course would only bring the girl deeper into the mix-up. In answer to the **Star** article he printed a statement in the **Herald** showing that the incident at Stone's place resulted from a blundering waiter mistaking a member of the party for a notorious criminal. He also stated that May was in the place at the time, and might have identified three members of the party to the satisfaction of the officers, but had failed to do so, probably for the reason that he was dazed with liquor. This sharp reply did not mend matters, and the town was full of gossip concerning the affair.

Duke had not yet found either the time or the courage to discuss with Mrs. Hill the promised visit of the Lawrences and Miss Hilton, so one afternoon he sought her home, believing that he could trust her, as a friend, to do the correct thing in the different problems at hand. The banker's wife was patrician to the core. To her mind a breach of etiquette was little less than a crime. Relentless in her judgment of offenses against the decrees of society, she was still, the young man believed, a woman to be depended upon in the present emergency.

She met him with an assuring smile on her face, tall, slender, gray of hair, but with the bloom of middle age in her cheeks. Mrs. Hill was always superbly gowned. She reveled in fine silks and laces. She met Duke in a toilet of light silk which became her well.

"So you have come to confession at last!" she said, as Duke stepped into the handsome parlor. "Don't stand there pretending you don't understand, sir! The whole city is ringing with it!"

Her manner was kind, but Duke saw that she meant to get to the bottom of the matter.

"Don't plead ignorance," continued the banker's wife, before Duke had opportunity to say a word. "Tell me the truth before you say one word in your own defense. Who is this Miss Louise Hilton? Tell me; are you bringing a wife to Harlan to usurp my place in society?"

"Nonsense!" The word wasn't much, but it was all Duke could think of then!

"Senator May doesn't call it by that name," continued the banker's wife. "He seems to be quite infatuated with Miss Louise Hilton."

Duke sank limply into a chair. He had not expected Mrs. Hill to take this tack.

"Of course," he said, "you have heard and read the whole wretched story!"

"Why not? The newspapers have been full of it! You wouldn't come to me with your explanation, and so I was obliged to accept Senator May's version of what is going on.

"Always Senator May!" complained Duke. "I am sick of the sound of the name!"

"Of course! Senator May appears on the scene in horns and hoofs, if you please, but on the scene for all that! Tell me. Are you really in love with this Miss Louise Hilton? Don't try to equivocate, sir. I'll have the truth out of you at last."

"I am honestly and truly in love with Miss Hilton," was the slow reply, "and I hope to make her my wife."

Mrs. Hill sank back in her chair with a gesture of despair.

"I know your Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence," she said, in a moment, "and I can't understand why they have encouraged you in such goings on. See what you come to, young man, when you withhold your confidences from me!"

There was a smile on the face of the banker's wife, but it was plain that she was taking the matter seriously. From the first she had taken Duke under her special protection, and the friendship between the two was tender and true.

"I have come to you now with my confidences," began Duke, but the lady stopped him.

"Tell me first about this Miss Louise Hilton," she commanded. "Senator May refers to her as a thoroughbred, and speaks of her style and action—as if she were a horse. I can't understand how that man ever got into good society!"

"The insolent puppy!" growled Duke.

"Of course. Insolent puppy if you choose, but why do you come to me only at this late hour? I'm ashamed of you, Duke!"

"I am in trouble," was the reply. "I come to you for help."

"Of course, Duke. As soon as young men get in love they get into trouble. But you haven't answered my question. Who is this Miss Louise Hilton? Who are her people, and where are they, and why do they permit her to go about in questionable places at night?"

"That is the point," replied Duke. "I don't know a thing about her, except that she is the dearest——"

"Certainly! Granted. Is it true that the Lawrences know nothing of this girl? Is it true that she wears silks and diamonds fit for a queen on a cashier's salary? Oh, Duke! I'm sorry for you! I pity your judgment."

"Senator May says that, does he?" gasped Duke. "His hour of reckoning shall come."

"Your hour of reckoning has come now," interposed the banker's wife, with a smile which cheered while it censured. "Is it true that this Miss Louise Hilton finds it convenient to draw a veil of mystery over her past? How do you know, how do the Lawrences know, that everything Senator May says, and insinuates without saying, is not true?"

"You are speaking of the lady I hope to make my wife!" cried Duke, flushing.

"No heroics!" smiled Mrs. Hill. "Oh, how can I discuss with patience the events of that wretched night! It is positively shameful!"

"Shameful, to be sure," replied Duke, "but I fail to see how Miss Hilton was at fault. Senator May simply struck at me and hit the girl. Put yourself in her place for a moment, and pity her. It is a terrible thing for a young girl to be obliged to rest, even for a minute, under such an accusation absurd and false though it may be."

"I am not censuring her because she was falsely accused," replied the banker's wife "I am not censuring her at all, Duke. I am looking at her as the affair at the restaurant threw her into the light. There she stands! A girl who declines to make known her past! A girl who even refuses to claim the protection of her relatives at such a time. A girl who dresses like a society queen on a cashier's pay! Perhaps we would better close the subject. It is too improper for discussion between us!"

Duke saw that the lady was seriously offended, and hastened to conciliate her.

"You have now stated the case," he said, "according to the viewpoint of Senator May. Have you nothing to say from the viewpoint of tender and forgiving womanhood? Somewhere beneath this veneer of society, Mrs. Hill, you hold a woman's heart. Tell me what I ought to do."

The banker's wife smiled kindly. Her severity of manner vanished before the young man's earnest plea.

"Where did you first meet this girl?" she asked. "Where and when?"

"Several months ago, at the Lawrences."

"She is employed at the Lawrence's?"

Duke nodded.

"And is admitted to their home?"

"Certainly."

"Why do you say 'Certainly?' It isn't every working girl who can gain favor with Annie Lawrence. Her people are the Sydneys of Boston."

"Miss Hilton is not an ordinary working girl, Mrs. Hill. Wait until you see her."

"Rubbish! Tell me what you want me to do. Oh, you wayward boy! To bring such a muddle for me to straighten out!"

"You know what I want you to do," replied Duke. "You are strong in your position here. The doors of the most exclusive homes open and close at your lightest word. Oh, can't you see what I want you to do for me—and Miss Hilton?"

"Do you ask me to receive Miss Hilton here—in my home? To endeavor to open the doors of society to her—as your wife that is to be? Oh, Duke!"

"If you can, and will," replied Duke.

"After what the newspapers have printed of her? After what Senator May has said about her?"

"Yes; and because of the things you mention."

"It is a perfectly outrageous thing you are asking of me, young man," said the banker's wife, with a tolerant smile which softened the words, "but I'll see what I can do for you. Leave the girl out of it, unless you seek to excite my anger. I am going to Philadelphia this evening to look upon this paragon of yours. Oh, don't say a word. I know Annie Sydney Lawrence quite well, and she won't turn me from her door."

Duke arose and took her hand.

"Thank you," he said.

"Don't expect too much from this visit," warned the banker's wife. "I shall be back before eleven o'clock, and may call you on the 'phone. You are putting my friendship to a severe test, young man," she added, still with an indignant smile, "but I can't see you going about with that dejected face!"

Duke could only express his appreciation of her kind intentions.

"You should have lived in the fourteenth century, Duke," said the lady, in a moment. "You don't fit into this age of steel and stone. You are too willing to tilt against the world for a maiden in distress."

Duke left the Hill home with the lightest heart he had known for days. He believed that, under the magic of Mrs. Hill's influence, he should win the day.

He raved about his editorial offices, waiting, until a late hour, and was then called to the 'phone. It was Mrs. Hill speaking.

"Miss Louise Hilton presents her compliments," she said.

"Is she there?" asked Duke, excitedly. "Call her to the 'phone."

"Not tonight," was the reply. "You may call later on."

"Tonight?"

"No, not tonight, you foolish boy. To be frank with you, she doesn't seem to relish the memory of that night, which is to her credit, I am sure. By the way, whom do you think we met at the station here? Senator May, of all persons! He glared when he saw Miss Hilton take the carriage with me. Watch that man, Duke! He means mischief."

"Means mischief," echoed Duke, as the connection was broken at the other end of the wire. "I should think he did! He has already accomplished quite a little in the way of trouble for us all. Now, I wonder what the Lawrences said to Mrs. Hill to bring her over so soon? They couldn't have told her much, unless Louise has been less secretive since the disgraceful incident at Stone's.

"Perhaps the affair did teach her that it is not best to try friends too far, but why did Mrs. Hill bring her on tonight? There's no finding out the reasons of a woman for anything she may do!"

With this wise reflection, Duke turned to the door and opened it to admit Mr. Hill. The banker was tall, slender and brisk. There were gray splatches at his temples and in his closely-cropped beard, but he was still youthful of eye and manner.

He was known throughout the State as a plucky man and a fine financier. His pluck was the pluck of a man who had fought his way to success by inches, winning only at middle age, when he had become the husband of the wealthy Miss Charlotte Mason.

Duke was both amazed and troubled at this late visit. It undoubtedly meant further complications. In fact, the banker looked tired and dispirited.

"I have just come from Malone," Hill finally said, with a sigh.

"Do you come to me at his request?" asked Duke, sharply.

"Decidedly not. He declares that he is done with you."

"I heard him say as much, in this very room."

"What is it all about, Duke? Can't you fix this thing up with Malone and May?"

"With May, after what he has said and done?" cried Duke, springing to his feet. "With your permission, I'll settle with May in my own way! In a way he won't like!"

"Well, then, leave May out of it," suggested Hill. "Compromise with Malone."

"I can't do what he wants me to," replied Duke, "and that settles that point."

"What's the use of making such a row?" persisted Hill. "Why not let him get his old charter, if he can, in any way he pleases? You can hardly constitute yourself guardian for the State, you know, Duke. Let the pirate alone."

The banker was very much in earnest in his argument.

"Oh, I'm not greatly interested in the dear people of the State," replied Duke, with a light laugh. "I'm only trying to keep on good terms with myself. I couldn't sleep nights for shame if I went into this dirty deal with these pirates."

"Lottie declares you came into the world five hundred years too late for your own good," smiled the banker, "but it seems as if you might unbend a trifle in this case. The Iron Company is all powerful here, and Dan Malone is in full control. The line of least resistance is usually best, my boy. Think it over."

"I know what I am risking," replied Duke, throwing his strong shoulders back and lifting his chin defiantly, impatiently, "and I know what Malone thinks he is going to do to me. We'll see whether he does or not. And he's after you, too. If you don't rub me off your list he's going to crush you—c-r-u-s-h, as he was kind enough to say in this room. Oh, yes, and he's going to drive Mrs. Hill from her social throne! Cheerful person, this man Malone, don't you think? I seem to feel him in the atmosphere—like a snake was in hiding somewhere. I'm afraid you'll have to withdraw your advertising from the **Herald**, Mr. Hill! If you don't Malone will get you!"

The banker sighed wearily. He looked worn out, mentally and physically, and Duke regretted that he had referred to what Malone had threatened on the night of his visit there with May.

"I wasn't thinking of my own interests," the banker said, "when I suggested a compromise with Malone. I can protect myself if he makes any breaks at me or the bank. He has the power to do me a great deal of mischief, but I'm not advising you to retract on my own account. What I was thinking was that you can't afford to take this chance."

"I'll have to take it!" replied Duke. "I'm sorry that you have been dragged into it. I'm sure I'm not to blame for that. If Malone can do you a mischief, go to him and condemn my course in the franchise matter in good, set terms. You ought not to put the bank in peril, you know. You can't afford to place the small savings accounts you hold in jeopardy. Take my advice and cut me out!"

"If I did that," laughed Hill, "my own wife would be closing her account at the bank! Perhaps I was wrong in advising you to effect a reconciliation with Malone. I'm afraid that such a course would only postpone the evil day. Some time we shall have to fight Malone, Duke. Why not now?"

Duke's fresh, boyish laugh for a moment drove the anxiety from the banker's face.

"Here we sit," he said, "each advising the other to bow down before Malone, to grab the crumbs he throws and lick his boots in gratitude! And, at the same time, each is planning fight! It won't do, Mr. Hill! It is no longer a question of choice with me. Malone is forcing my hand. It is different with you."

The banker shook his gray head sadly.

"All you've got to do," persisted Duke, "is to cut me. Malone will forgive you for being the husband of Mrs. Hill if you'll do that. His wife won't like it, but Dan will have his way. Why, the fellow might cause the withdrawal of all your savings deposits! If he started the mill men, all the rest would follow their lead?"

"Unquestionably!"

"And that would close your doors until you could call in your loans, and the calling in of your loans would make trouble here, and cost you no end of money—perhaps more than you have gained during the last decade."

"All true!" admitted the banker.

"Then what's the answer?"

"I believe," replied the other, slowly, like a man expressing in words a disagreeable conclusion long in mind, "that in any event Malone will make a fight against me before very long. He hates me, and he hates Mrs. Hill. With my bank out of the way, he might establish one of his own, using the credit of the Iron Company for the purpose. With Mrs. Hill out of the way, Mrs. Malone might dictate to Harlan society. And what I say of myself is probably true in your case. Malone wants to see the **Herald** in the hands of a man he can control. I wish now," he added, meeting Duke's eyes with a smile, "to withdraw every word I have said here regarding a compromise with Malone. We have got to fight him, Duke, and fight him to a showdown."

Before Duke could reply, a light footstep was heard in the hall beyond the door of the private room. It sounded like one walking stealthily, like a person afraid of making his presence known. Then a dirty buff envelope was pushed in under the door, the action being followed by the sound of quick running on the stairs.

"Another threatening letter!" said Duke. "The third today!"

Skull and cross-bones were rudely outlined in red ink on the envelope.

CHAPTER V.

COURAGE OF MRS. HILL.

"As I have observed," said Duke, lifting the envelope from the floor, "this man Malone has his good points as a rival. He never leaves one in doubt as to what his intentions are. I have received a number of these things lately, promising all sorts of ill luck. Let us see what this contains."

He tore open the envelope and held a half sheet of soiled paper up to the light. There was no writing. Only a rough drawing of a coffin. Duke looked at the sketch a moment and threw it contemptuously into a waste-basket.

"Why don't you take it to the police?" asked the banker, nervously.

"What's the use? I've got to fight this thing out alone. Some night I'll get this clever scoundrel with a gun. I mean the person who brings or sends these things, of course, and not Malone. I want to save him for service in the State penitentiary. A man of his build and temper ought to be able to turn out a good many shoes in a day."

Duke darkened the office, locked the door, and the two proceeded to the street. The elevator was closed for the night, it being nearly midnight, and so they passed down a staircase winding about the elevator shaft and terminating in a hallway which ran along one side of the business office to the street in front, and to the circulation division in the rear.

The hallway was dimly lighted, and as they came to the street door a movement in a shadowy corner attracted their attention.

"Our friend of the stampless letter may be here now," said Duke, "waiting for his stipend. You don't happen to have a brick in your pocket?"

"This is no laughing matter," whispered the banker, clutching Duke's arm. "There may be danger here"

But it was only Steve, a printer who had been at work in the composing room on the lower floor, which was a half basement under the business office, and was now on his way home. He advanced out of the shadows as Duke and the banker halted.

"I wouldn't go out there just yet," he said. "There's a bunch of gazabos from the Iron Works hanging about. I came up from the machines just now and they chased me in here. Wish I had a gun."

"I wish with all my heart you had!" exclaimed Duke, opening the street door cautiously and looking out, his body still in the hallway.

It was snowing outside, and the air was filled with whirling flakes. Even under the strong light of the electric lamps, Duke could see only a few feet through the sweep of the storm. As he looked, however, there came a cry from the direction of the corner, a guttural cry of derision, and the plate glass in the door crumbled beneath the impact of a pound of iron ore thrown from beyond.

Duke slammed the door and brushed the broken glass from his clothes. Some one was running outside, his footsteps partially muffled by the fallen snow, and in a moment pursuit was taken up. Then an officer came into the hallway.

"Did you catch him?" asked the young editor, eagerly.

"We did not," was the reply. "My partner is after him now. There's some one hanging about here most of the night," he continued. "Guess some chap has it in for you."

Duke warned the officer to keep a close watch of the place, and he went off to assist his partner in the chase, accompanied by the printer.

"You see how it is," said Duke, as he faced the storm, the banker by his side. "I couldn't get out of this fight if I wanted to. As you must have noticed tonight, the ironmaster is playing all the leading cards. He's determined to force me to sell out and leave town."

The banker said little in reply. He walked along through the storm with his chin almost touching his breast.

"I'm sorry," he finally said, "but let us hope it will come out all right. By the way, I have forgotten my errand to your place tonight. Malone seems to crowd everything into the corner nowadays. What I went there for was to deliver a message from Lottie, one she wished me to deliver in person. She wants you to look out for your personal safety. She's heard something she won't tell even me, something she wouldn't talk over the 'phone."

"She is unnecessarily alarmed," was Duke's comment.

"Judging from the events of the past few minutes," said the banker, "I think she is right and you are wrong. Anyway, I have delivered her message. And there was something else. Yes, she is to give a reception in honor of Miss Hilton and the Lawrences next Tuesday evening. My orders are to frighten you so you'll take care of yourself and be with us. And she told me to remind you that May and Malone would be there."

"Fine thing to bring Miss Hilton and May together at this time!" cried Duke. "This looks to me like fishing for trouble. Do you know what it all means?"

"I only know," was the reply, "that Lottie usually knows what she is about in these social games. She plays a mighty stiff hand when she sits in, Duke. We must leave it to her. It does look odd to have May and the Malones there to meet the Lawrences and Miss Hilton, after the way they have talked about them, but I fall back on the fact that Lottie is an old campaigner and has chosen the battle ground. Did you notice," he added, reverting to the topic under discussion at the office, "that the thing which broke your door was a piece of iron ore?"

"Of course," replied Duke. "I have been bombarded with iron ore before tonight. Thoughtful on the part of my assailants, eh? You see, the ore does the mischief as well as a stone or brick would do it, and at the same time, reminds me that I am in disfavor with the captain of the iron industry of the town. Clever thought, eh?"

They now came to the hotel where Duke lodged, and the banker took a cab for home, leaving Duke to seek his room and slumber. However, sleep was about the only thing that did not come to Duke's troubled brain that night. He thought of the first meeting with Louise, and of the last; of the origin of the trouble with the ironmaster; of the disgraceful scene at the restaurant; of the many efforts to frighten him away from the city; of the coming reception, when the opposing forces would meet face to face. Then it was daylight, and he arose to go about the routine of his work, to long for the night of the reception, and to dread its coming!

It came at last, after a lull in the persecutions to which Duke had been subjected. After the night of the banker's visit to the office, no violence was attempted, and Duke passed through the streets as before, free from annoyance by the swarthy men of the mill. He could not exactly understand this, but the lack of strain was grateful, after all. During the week he had seen Louise only once, and then only for a few moments. At the Hill mansion all was bustle, for the reception was to be one to set the pace for the winter, and many out of town people were coming.

When he entered the house on the night of the reception he found Mrs. Hill surveying the last detail with pardonable pride. It was all very grand and pretty, but to the young editor's troubled mind it resembled a battle field just before the firing of the first gun. He was permitted a short interview with Louise and Mrs. Lawrence, and warned them against the Malones.

"Mrs. Malone is equal to anything," he said.

"I shall not lose my temper, whatever takes place," replied Louise, and Mrs. Lawrence echoed the girl's brave speech.

Then the receiving line was formed and the reception was on. There were present statesmen and men and women whose names might be found on the title pages of successful books and in the corners of popular drawings. There were merchants of the town, escorting their fussy wives and awkward daughters, and men holding positions of trust at the Iron Works.

All passed to the receiving group, muttered polite words of greeting, and then gathered in little groups to discuss the things nearest to their lives. Some moved nervously about, interested only when some guest of note granted a word or a nod. It was a great success. A person of less social importance than Mrs. Hill could not have brought such a gathering of notables together to meet the guests of honor after gossip had torn their characters to shreds.

Presently the banker stepped forward with a guest who appeared to be an entire stranger in the room, except to the man at his elbow. He was young, slight of figure, handsome, and carried an air of being perfectly at home in evening dress, which many of the guests did not. Although young, strong and well set, his face gave one the impression that he had long since done with the things of youth. It was a fascinating face, yet somewhere, somehow, it revealed the weaknesses of a self-indulgent person.

Duke started forward involuntarily when he saw the young man. Where had he seen that face before? With what part of his life had it been associated? He could not answer the question which came to his mind. It was just such a muddle as he had sensed when he first met Louise at the Lawrence store. In a moment he heard the banker saying:

"Oh, yes, Mr. Darling is well known to me in the way of business. He is quite interested in our city, and is looking for investments here."

Duke thought he observed a change in Louise's face when the young man stood before her. She seemed paler, and he caught in her eyes the expression he had seen at the restaurant—an expression of appeal, of dismay, of a resolute spirit well nigh overcome by compromising conditions.

Mr. Darling did not at once leave the girl's side. Instead, he bent forward and spoke to her in a tone so low and guarded that the communication assumed the character of a private and personal one. Mrs. Hill was plainly annoyed. In a moment the girl's eyes flashed dangerously and the color came back to her cheeks. Then Darling smiled and turned away. Duke was too angry for speech.

The incident convinced Duke that Darling's acquaintance with Louise antedated the arrival of the girl at Philadelphia. There was, he thought, something in common between them which could not wait until the reception was over. Duke's idea was that the whispered communication was not pleasant in character. It had annoyed the girl. Would the coming of the young man be to the advantage of Louise, or would it further complicate matters? Would he supply the key to the mystery she had surrounded herself with, or would his silence deepen it? Duke sought the conservatory in a surly mood. In a moment Hill came to him with Darling at his side.

"You ought to know Mr. Darling, Duke," he said. "He's quite likely to become one

of our leading citizens some day—when he settles down," with a light laugh.

After chatting a few moments the banker moved away, leaving the two together. Duke tried to draw the young man into conversation, but he talked only commonplaces. As they stood there together the Malones were announced.

"The Iron Works people?" asked Darling.

"Yes, and late—for effect. As I don't care to meet them I'll step aside for a cigar. We aren't in love with each other—the Malones and I."

"I rather want to see what they're like," said Darling, "so I'll go inside."

"You'll find them interesting, in some ways," smiled Duke.

But the young editor found it impossible to keep away from the receiving line. He soon found himself back there, with Darling not far away. Presently he saw the pudgy manager of the Iron Company standing before the guests of honor, his wife at his side. He could not hear the first words spoken, but the face of the banker's wife was all smiles, so he argued that all was still well. Then, in an instant of silence, which seemed to have been arranged by fate for the occasion, he heard Mrs. Malone saying, in a tone which was audible throughout the large room:

"Indeed! I am pleased to meet friends of the hostess! Besides, I am already quite interested in Miss Hilton, having heard many amusing stories concerning her."

The first gun was fired. Every person in the room heard the brutal reference to the scandal which had been bruited about the city by Senator May and his followers. Every one understood that the words were intended as an insult to the hostess and the guests of honor. For a moment no one spoke.

At the conclusion of her insulting speech Mrs. Malone lifted her glass and leisurely and impudently surveyed the girl from head to foot. Insult and triumph were in her face. The smile on the face of the banker's wife was sweeter than before. Louise stood for a moment as if about to make reply to the affront, but, feeling the restraining influence of the hostess' arm about her waist, she remained silent.

Then came the voice of the hostess, clear, vibrant, reaching every part of the room.

"Oh, yes," she said, "some of the stories to which you refer are doubtless amusing in the slums in which they originated. I prefer, however, that they should be confined in the telling to the social outcasts and scandal-mongers who are repeating them, and not referred to in my house. I regret that you are obliged to leave the house at once, but your carriage will be at the door immediately."

"My God!" gasped the banker, seizing Duke by the arm, "Lottie is turning the woman out of the house!"

Every person who had heard the insult also heard the reply. The guests looked at each other in silence. Mrs. Malone retained her self-control. She beckoned to her husband and waited where she stood for him to make his way to her side.

"As I told you," she said, "Mrs. Hill is excessively annoyed at our immediate departure. Kindly order the carriage. Sorry to leave so soon, I'm sure."

Malone's brassy face shifted from red to purple. His heavy eyebrows settled down until his eyes resembled pin-points of flame.

"What does this mean?" he demanded.

His wife checked him for an instant by a look which admonished him to take his revenge at another time and in another place, but to keep his temper there. Only for an instant, however, did the angry ironmaster listen to the voice of prudence. He urged his burly person forward so that he stood within a yard of the serene mistress of the house.

"I want to hear in plain words why we are being turned out of this house!" he shouted, as the astonished guests gathered about. "If this open insult is because of what has been said of this creature with a police record, I demand the right to be heard. I can make good on anything Mrs. Malone has said concerning her."

Much more he would have said, in his ungovernable passion, but he now felt a hand laid firmly on his arm, and turned to face Darling.

"Who are you?" he shouted, in the young man's face. "I refuse to discuss the matter with you. My business here is with Hill and his wife."

"It ought not to be necessary," said Darling, calmly, "in the presence of these ladies, to remind you that this is no place for saloon manners. Your wife has been turned out of the house for insulting a guest. Will it be necessary to summon the police to enforce her commands?"

"We shall see who will be first to receive the attention of the police!" shouted Malone, turning to the circle of frightened faces. "There will be something doing tomorrow at the bank, Hill!" he added. "Don't say that you were not warned."

In a minute he was out of the house. In the buzz of small talk which followed, in the little stir made by those employed at the mill in getting away, Duke hastened to the side of the banker's wife.

"I think you are the bravest woman alive," he said.

"You shall now see," said Mrs. Hill, ignoring the remark, "how frail and selfish is the foundation upon which rests this shell of conventionality. Those who have no pecuniary interest whatever in this social war will remain on the chance of hearing something racy which they can repeat."

"I can't find words to tell you how sorry I am," said Duke.

"And," continued Mrs. Hill, "those who anticipate favors from the Malones will go, making much of their going, you may be sure, while those who have overdrawn accounts at the bank will grow eloquent in their efforts to make little of what has taken place."

The truth of her words became apparent. Those who were connected with the Iron Works hastened away, but the crush was little reduced and the reception went on swimmingly. The banker's wife stood like a warrior at her guns. During all that trying time not a trace of care or emotion showed in her smiling face. Arm in arm with Louise, she moved about the house, bent on performing her duty as hostess by placing her guests at their ease. Louise appeared abundantly happy. Her cheeks were flushed with the excitement of the time and her eyes sparkled joyously. A fit comrade for the brave old soldier of society who was facing a serious crisis for the first time in her life! Duke was proud of them both.

In the refreshment-room Duke came upon the banker and Darling, evidently engaged in private conversation. Hill motioned for him to join them.

"You see we were right," he said. "They came here to insult the guest of honor. Jove! But Lottie did turn them out in grand style. It will be the talk of the town tomorrow."

Duke turned to Darling.

"You are likely to get a queer notion of our social life," he said.

"A great many times," replied Darling, "when we are not quite so close to the firing line, we know the battle is on just the same. I wonder how the Malones will take their defeat?"

"Like gladiators," replied Hill. "They came here expecting to leave the house with the prestige of having insulted with impunity both my wife and Miss Hilton, rejoicing in the victory of having placed the stamp of their disapproval on them both. Lottie was too quick for the woman, and turned her out of the house at the first word. But, after all, the Malones will die fighting."

"Well," said Darling, with a drawl, "you fight it out. Never you mind what is said in the city. You fight it out. Mrs. Hill knows what she is about, and so does Miss Hilton. Fight it out."

"I am afraid the Malones will make it unpleasant for Miss Hilton," said the banker. "It might be well for her to go to her people—not that we would be rid of her, but for her own peace of mind."

"Perhaps you are right," replied Duke, gloomily.

"You ask Miss Hilton if she wants to run away now," put in Darling. "You know jolly well that you couldn't drive her out of town now in a coach-and-four. She'll stick until the Malones haven't a place to lay their heads."

"Answer me one question," said Duke, annoyed at the young man making himself the spokesman for Louise, "what is your knowledge of Miss Hilton?"

"Come, now," was the smiling reply, "if you want to know about Miss Hilton, ask her. If she wants things said, she'll say them herself, don't you think? You go on and put the Malones out of town. That's what you've got to do."

"Oh, there is nothing else to do now," put in the banker. "The town is not large enough for both interests. Malone means war and he shall have it, but I expect a bad day at the bank tomorrow."

"Malone does his banking with you?" asked Darling.

"Yes, and he'll be down on me like a thousand of brick in the morning. The worst of it is that I am already short of currency, my money being out earning more."

"That's rather tough," said Darling, thoughtfully. "Look here," he added, "I have a lot of New York paper which I will hand in for collection. The money may as well lie in your bank as another. And, pardon business here, Mr. Hill, but I really am a lazy chap, you know, and I won't be out of bed until noon, you see, and so you may as well take the drafts now and send them on for collection in the morning."

"Thank you," replied the banker, taking the papers carelessly into his hand. "I'll send them out tonight."

Then he looked at the drafts and turned to Darling with an astonished face.

"Half a million!" he said.

"I think that is the figure," replied Darling, coolly. "Get the money here as soon as you can and give me c. d's. for a year."

Duke regarded the young man in wonder. How well he knew that he had known him in some other place and at some other time, but he could not go beyond that. He tried to associate the young man with Louise, and to place them together in the forgotten setting, but it was of no use. At any rate Darling was getting into the game with a remarkably good hand, and Duke was glad of that. Presently Mrs. Hill came to them.

"I have been looking everywhere for you," she said to Darling. "If these gentlemen will excuse you, I will carry you off to Miss Hilton. She heard what you said to Malone and wants to thank you. And Duke," she added, "you are to report before leaving the house. We must map out a plan of battle, you know."

The banker and the editor remained alone in the conservatory after the notables had departed, for the rest of the social swim did not interest them, and they wanted to think and speak of the morrow.

Presently Duke saw Miss Hilton and Darling making their way to an alcove off the large conservatory, a quiet little room where there was little likelihood of their being interrupted. The brief glance he caught of the girl's face showed him that she was deeply moved. The look of despair he had seen there twice before was on her face, and there were traces of tears on her cheeks. Darling seemed to be trying to comfort her, but with little success.

Duke hastened to take leave of the hostess and left the house, going to his editorial rooms rather than his lodgings. There he threw himself into a chair, lit a cigar and, beginning with his childhood, went over every incident and companionship that he could remember. In all that array of passing pictures not one brought to him the face of Louise, or the face of Darling.

"I am a fool," he said at last. "I have never known them until now. It is a riddle no longer. I give it up."

Then he went home to dream that Darling and Louise were man and wife, and that they were finding each other's hearts again after a foolish quarrel.

CHAPTER VII.

RUSHING THE BANK.

When Duke entered the breakfast room of the hotel a little before 9 o'clock the next morning, he was met at the door by one of the leading merchants of the city, who seemed anxious and excited.

"What is this about the bank?" asked Duke.

"There is nothing wrong with the bank, I guess," was the reply.

"There will be before night," said the merchant, "for there is sure to be a run. Dan Malone is waiting at the door now to draw out the deposit of the Iron Company, and the street is full of men and women with their savings books in their hands. Malone has given his men a holiday, I understand. What is the trouble between Malone and Hill? They used to be thick enough."

"Mrs. Malone was turned out of the Hill house, last night, for insulting a guest, and Dan naturally resents it, but I fail to see why he should try to break up the business of the city."

"Well, I doubt if Hill can keep afloat till closing time," said the merchant. "My deposit comes out as soon as I can get to the window."

"Malone doesn't own all the money there is in the bank," said Duke. "Why don't you stand by Hill? He stood by you where there wasn't another bank that would touch your paper."

"I can't afford to take chances," replied the merchant, darting away.

When Duke reached the bank it was plain to be seen that the merchant had not exaggerated the peril of the situation. An excited crowd filled the street—a hooting, howling, insulting crowd, in red shirts, open at the neck and oily trousers. He spoke to a couple of the workmen he knew, but received only sullen replies.

Malone stood at the top of the steps, waiting for the doors to be opened. He scowled at Duke, but did not speak.

"I'm afraid it is a bad mess," he heard Malone saying, "but I have given the boys a chance to get their money."

When the doors swung open, a moment later, Malone was first at the window of the paying teller. After a short delay he stepped back with a leather bag stuffed with currency. "I've got the pay roll, anyway," he said, making way for others.

The door leading to the banker's private office was locked and barred when Duke came to it, but he was admitted at once. The banker, looking like a man who had not slept during the night, extended his hand.

"Malone seems to be doing things today," he said.

"Can you hold out?" asked Duke.

"During the day," was the reply, "but the end is not far off, unless I can get Darling's money here from New York by night."

"That is impossible," said Duke. "Have you wired for the currency to be shipped, the drafts being on the way?"

"Yes, but they may not do it. If I can only hold out until that half-million gets here I can pull through."

"Who is this man Darling," asked Duke, "who goes about country with half a million dollars in his dress clothes?"

"I can tell you nothing," was the reply. "I know him only from letters of introduction which he presented."

"He seems to know Louise pretty well."

"I noticed that," replied the banker, "and wondered at it a little, but this thing has driven all else from my mind."

"I am sorry," said Duke, "and I can't get the notion out of my mind that I am to blame for it all."

"It had to come," said Mr. Hill. "There was no other way. Malone wants to own the town. Up to this time there have been two enterprises here which he could not control. I refer to the **Evening Herald** and the bank. He expects to get them both as the result of today's operations."

"He shall never have the **Herald**," said Duke, savagely.

The two men stood silently by the glazed door and watched the crowd in the street. Every moment the cries became louder and more threatening. There seemed to be some one in the street directing the noisy efforts of the mob. Their cries were all in one key. They wanted their money, and they wanted revenge on the two men who were trying to drive the Iron Works from the city—Hill and Gaylord.

Presently Duke, personally, came in for a share of attention.

"Throw that dude out here," shouted a voice. "He's the one that wants to put us all out of work. Throw him out here."

The cry was taken up by scores of throats, but no rush was made.

"You will observe," said the young editor, "that Malone does not do things by halves, even in getting up popular demonstrations. I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I can do no good here, in fact, may do harm by remaining. I'll go to the office and get out an extra."

"You can indeed assist in that way. Make it strong—bank able to pay dollar for dollar, and all that. By the way, have you seen anything of Darling this morning?"

Duke shook his head.

"He was rather late at the house last night," said the banker, "closeted with the girl for no one knows how long. Lottie nearly had a fit, for the girl was all broken up after the interview, and Darling was not in the best of spirits. There's mystery for you to unravel, old man."

Duke hastened away without making reply. He was not anxious to hear the banker talk of the two in the same breath. He had already heard enough to fill his heart with bitter thoughts for many hours to come.

Duke was obliged to fight his way through the mob, and to ignore insults which at another time would have been sharply resented, but no personal violence was attempted. The mob was not quite ready for decisive action at that time.

An extra edition giving every assurance of the solvency of the Hill bank, and urging patience and observance of law, was hastily prepared and placed in the hands of a hundred waiting newsboys. In a double-leaded editorial the editor placed the responsibility for the run on the bank exactly where it belonged.

"Dan Malone," he wrote, "has long been envious of the confidence reposed in Banker Hill by the people of Harlan. In taking the action which has produced the riotous results observable in our streets today, Malone is only carrying out a threat made not long ago, when he declared to the editor of the **Evening Herald** that he would crush Mr. Hill. Because of their disgraceful conduct at the Hill reception last evening, Mr. and Mrs. Malone were turned out of the house, and this hastened the plans of the vicious manager of the Iron Company. Dan Malone has set out to wreck the Hill bank and bring loss and suffering to thousands of homes in the city. Whether he succeeds rests with the people of Harlan."

"I rather think Dan Malone will enjoy reading that," mused Duke, as he glanced over the paper.

The appearance of the extra turned the attention of the mob to the newspaper building. Standing at a front window, Duke saw the papers taken by force from the newsboys and destroyed.

As he stood looking into the angry faces below, already lifted threateningly to the window where he stood, already menacing the building, he saw the banker's carriage turn into the street and come to a halt. It had evidently been the purpose of the occupants of the carriage to reach the bank, but with that cordon of inflamed and vindictive faces swarming about it, with a hundred brawny arms, naked to the elbows, threatening the coachman and the horses and making determined rushes for the vehicle itself, this was impossible. In a moment the frightened coachman turned and urged his horses in the direction of the **Herald** office, the mob clinging to the wheels, the steps, and to the harness, shouting hoarse threats at the occupants and at the banker.

Then a squad of policemen swung down the street, and the carriage completed its journey to the office through an alley lined with heavy night-sticks and revolvers. As the carriage drew up at the curb Mrs. Hill and Louise stepped out and, under the protection of the police, made their way to the elevator leading to the editorial rooms. Duke stepped away from the window and advanced down the hallway to meet them. As he did so a paving stone flew from a grimy hand and crashed through the glass behind which he had stood.

For an instant no one spoke. The howls of the mob, the ring of breaking window panes, would have drowned their voices had they attempted to give utterance to the words which came to their lips. Only temporarily checked by the police, and excited anew at the demonstration of property which was in progress, the mob gained new courage.

Think of Last Summer--

You can remember days when the heat inside your kitchen was so great you could hardly bear it. With the right stove you would have made a better hostess. Save your health. Don't put up with the drudgery of a coal range. You can have a clean, cool, pleasant kitchen. The

New Perfection
WICK BLUE FLAME
Oil Cook-stove

Cautionary Note: Be sure you get this stove—see that the name-plate reads "New Perfection."

does away with all drudgery of cooking. Why should you be a slave to a coal range when you can have an Oil Cook-Stove that is cheaper than coal, cleaner than coal, doesn't "smell," doesn't smoke, lights instantly, can be put out instantly, leaves no ashes, and **doesn't heat the kitchen.** With one of these stoves you can boil, bake or roast the most elaborate dinner. You can change from a slow to a quick fire, or the other way about, by simply turning a wick. Apply a match, and instantly the heat from an intense blue flame shoots upward through the turquoise-blue enamel chimneys to the bottom of pot, kettle or oven—but nowhere else. The stove has every convenience that can be thought of: Cabinet Top with shelf for keeping food and dishes hot, drop shelves to hold coffee or teapots, towel rack; in fact every convenience possible.

The nickel finish, with the bright blue of the chimneys, makes the stove ornamental and attractive.

Made with 1, 2 and 3 burners; the 2 and 3-burner stoves can be had with or without Cabinet.

Every dealer everywhere. If not at yours, write for Descriptive Circular to the nearest agency of the

Standard Oil Company
(Incorporated)

Above the awful confusion came the shrill voice of a leader, cursing the owner of the Herald and calling for volunteers to break into the building and destroy the printing presses. This call was followed by a rush of feet which told the peril of the moment. The banker's wife and Louise were deathly pale, but they did not shrink when a full realization of the danger of their situation was revealed to them. If the mob gained the building, their lives would not for a moment be safe.

"Malone evidently does not approve of my extra," Duke said, after a pause.

As he spoke the sharp ring of a pistol shot came from the pavement below, followed by comparative silence. The rush of feet was heard no more for the time, and again the hum of the presses in the basement echoed the business life of the structure.

"I hope no officer fired that shot," said Mrs. Hill. "This is a time for patience and forbearance."

Duke escorted the ladies to his private office, the windows of which gave on the street, and the three looked out upon the surging mob below. Far down the street they saw a police ambulance making its way toward the scene of disorder, the driver lashing right and left at the frenzied rioters as they caught at the heads of the horses and tried to turn them from their course.

"Some one has been shot," said Duke. "I hope it will lead to nothing worse."

Again the noise grew deafening. Leaning from the window, Duke saw a line of policemen drawn up in front of the building, shutting the mob away from the entrance. Back of the resolute line, men who had thrown away their caps in the excitement of the moment, and torn their red shirts away from their necks, were prying paving stones from the streets. These were mostly foreigners, imported by the Iron Company, many of them unable to speak a word of English. Some one was urging them on, speaking shrilly in their own tongue.

Lying on the pavement was a man in his shirtsleeves. His head was supported by an officer in uniform, and a surgeon, caught unwillingly in the crowd, was bending over him. A torrent of blood was gushing from a wound in the man's neck, staining the light snow of the street a dull red.

As the three at the window watched the scene, hoping to see in the wounded man some sign of life, the chief of the city fire department rounded a corner and dashed a swift horse into the mob, which parted sullenly and instantly closed again. The clang of fire gongs and the rumble of heavy wheels followed the chief into the street. Then, for the first time, the little group at the window caught the odor of burning wood.

"They have fired the building!" cried Duke.

Half a block away, in the opposite direction from that in which the police ambulance was fighting its way to the side of the dying man, a squad of men in plain clothes, armed with rifles which shone ominously in the sunlight, was advancing toward the building. The sheriff's officers had been summoned to the assistance of the police.

The continuation of this splendid story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. It is full of startling developments and will grow better with each chapter. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year: it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscriptions, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

YOUR BACKACHE WILL YIELD

To Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Bloomdale, Ohio.—"I suffered from terrible headaches, pains in my back and right side, and was tired all the time and nervous. I could not sleep, and every month I could hardly stand the pain. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound restored me to health again and made me feel like a new woman. I hope this letter will induce other women to avail themselves of this valuable medicine."—Mrs. E. M. FREDERICK, Bloomdale, Ohio.

Backache is a symptom of female weakness or derangement. If you have backache don't neglect it. To get permanent relief you must reach the root of the trouble. Nothing we know of will do this so safely and surely as Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Cure the cause of these distressing aches and pains and you will become well and strong.

The great volume of unsolicited testimony constantly pouring in proves conclusively that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from roots and herbs, has restored health to thousands of women.

If you have the slightest doubt that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will help you, write to Mrs. Pinkham at Lynn, Mass., for advice. Your letter will be absolutely confidential, and the advice free.

Pickled Peppers

WHY MR. BUGGLETT LEFT.

Once Mr. Bugglett took a stroll
  Down by the babbling brook.
When he was gloomy, that's a stroll
  He very often took.
But when he reached the brook he spied
  A man upon the bank,
With pole and line 'a-fishing,
  And his little bug-heart sank.
"This is no place for me," he cried,
  "I'll leave it, ere too late,
For he might put me on his hook
  If he is short of bait.
If he should put me on that hook,
  'Twould be the death of me,
And I would drown, for I am not
  A water bug, you see."

Came in Handy.

Mrs. Wisely—You'd better go see the doctor. You're getting as deaf as a post.

Mr. Wisely—All right, my dear; I'll go as soon as the Fourth is over.

Why Jones Ate Liver.

A hill district negro went to a butcher shop to buy pork chops, just before they took one of those sudden jumps in price. Pork chops were two pounds for a quarter and Sam got a quarter's worth. As he paid for the chops he saw some liver on the counter, so he ordered a pound for his dogs. The butcher took his long, keen knife and very carefully sliced the liver. Sam looking on, surprised to see the man take such pains. He threw down a dime, after the liver was wrapped up.

"Twenty cents more," said the butcher.

"Why, man," said Sam, "I nevah paid mo' dan 10 cents a pound for livah in my life."

"Oh, said the butcher, "that was cow's liver. This is calf's liver."

Sam scratched his head, but he was loath to reject the liver after the butcher took such pains with it, so he paid the money. On the way home he thought hard and to some purpose, for at the house, placing the packages on the kitchen table, he remarked to his wife:

"I bought two pounds of pohk chops foh de Joneses and a pound of livah foh de dawgs. But dis livah am calf's livah. De pohk chops cost two pounds for a quahtah, de livah 30 cents a pound. No dogs shan't eat any bettah dan deir boss, so de Jones'll eat de livah and de dogs can have de pohk chops."

Prize Dog Went to Him.

A young man who conducts night classes at one of the mission settlements, and who is very much interested in the problem of the "bad boy" was on his way home one evening when he caught sight of a company of youngsters evidently having a good time over something in a dark alleyway.

Eager to show his spirit of comradeship, the young man stopped at the alley and approached the boys. When he drew near them he saw that one held a sad-looking puppy by a string and that the others were laughing uproariously. The puppy was making vain efforts to escape.

"Why, what are you doing with the dog, fellows?" queried the young man, amicably. The boys snickered.

"We're going to give him as a prize to the one of us that tells the biggest lie," announced the smallest boy.

The young worker gasped. "Oh, boys," he said, "that is not right. You oughtn't to want to tell lies. When I was your age I had never told a lie in my life."

The youngster who had spoken before turned to the boy that held the puppy.

"Play fair, kids," he demanded. "He won it. Give him the dog."

Information in Prayer.

Princeton graduates love to tell a story of good old Dr. McCosh, who was president many years. Dr. McCosh was very absent-minded, and in making the announcements at 8 o'clock chapel in the morning, had to have some reminder on a memo card or he was almost sure to forget. One day the French professor asked him, just as he was mounting the platform in the chapel, to announce to the juniors that their class would meet at 9 that morning instead of 10. The president nodded, but completely forgot about it, not finding any reminder among his written announcements.

A long prayer always brought chapel to a close in those days, and Dr. McCosh, on this day, was almost through the prayer, when he suddenly remembered the request. Undeterred, however, he slipped in an additional phrase just before the "Amen," and the chapel faithfuls were edified to hear, among other petitions, "And oh, God, cause the juniors to remember that their French class will be at 9 this morning, instead of 10."

The juniors remembered.

Out of His Way.

Mrs. Gotham—You are going downtown, are you not?

Mr. Gotham—Yes, my dear.

Mrs. G.—Well, I wish you'd drop into Silke, Ribbon & Co's on your way and match the——"

Mr. G. (hurriedly)—I've got to see Jones, and that will take me some distance from Silke, Ribbon & Co's.

Mrs. G.—Well, Mr. Jones' office is only a short distance from the Imported Finery Bazaar, and that will do just as well. Take this and ask——"

Mr. G. (hastily)—After leaving Jones I must see Smith, who is in the opposite direction from the Bazaar, you know.

Mrs. G.—No matter. Cheape, Bargain & Co. will do. They are near Smith's.

Mr. G.—But I've got to take a roundabout way to Smith's in order to see Brown. Can't pass Cheape, Bargain & Co.'s, my dear.

Mrs. G. (impatiently)—H'm! Where are you going when you leave Smith's?

Mr. G. (helplessly)—I'm going up in a balloon.

Settin'.

A farmer was sawing wood, when it occurred to him that he ought to have the help of one or more of his five boys. Lifting up his voice he called, but not a boy appeared.

At dinner of course they all appeared, and it was not necessary to call them.

"Where were you all about two hours ago, when I wanted you and shouted for you?"

"I was in the shop, settin' the saw," said one.

"And I was in the barn, settin' a hen," said the second.

"I was in gran'ma's room, settin' the clock," said the third.

"I was in the garret, settin' the trap," said the fourth.

"You are a remarkable set!" remarked the farmer. "And where were you?" he continued, turning to the youngest.

"I was on the doorstep, settin' still."

Why She Couldn't Accept.

Telephone operators who plug wrong numbers or get the wires crossed sometimes are responsible for very embarrassing situations, as was exemplified by a broker.

"The broker called up his home number and said to the person on the other end of the wire:

"Hullo, dear, is that you?"

"Yes," replied a sweet-toned voice.

"Well, I've been thinking about you all morning. I want you to come downtown and meet me for lunch and we'll go to a show this afternoon."

"Well, that would be very nice," replied the person on the other end, "and I should dearly love to do so, but my husband is home and I'm afraid he'd object. Don't you think you've got the wrong number?"

A Perplexed Professor.

A professor, who is an ornament of Yale University, accepted an engagement to lecture in a city some distance away. His train arrived late, so he jumped quickly into a cab, handed the driver two dollars, and shouted: "Drive fast!"

The horse started with a plunge, and kept going for a rapid rate for half an hour, up one street and down another. Finally the professor, who was meanwhile concentrating his thoughts upon the forthcoming lecture, stuck his head out of the window and inquired:

"Are you nearly there, cabby?"

"Blessed (or otherwise) if I know, mister!" was the astonishing reply. "Where did you want to go?"

Qualifying.

Henry Peck—I tell you I'm nobody's fool.

Mrs. Peck—What's that!

Mr. Peck—Except yours, my love. Only yours.

Where Father Got Stung.

One afternoon not long ago, in the vicinity of Druid Hill Park, in Baltimore, there might have been seen a young man industriously pushing up and down a baby carriage, intently reading a book the while.

"Henry! Henry!" called a young woman from the second-story of a house opposite.

Henry heard not, but continued to push the baby carriage and to read his book.

In about an hour the cries of "Henry" were repeated.

"Well, what do you want?" he demanded, rather impatiently.

"Nothing dear," was the irritating response, "except to inform you that you've been wheeling Harriet's doll all the afternoon. I think it's time for the baby to have a turn now."

A SCALEY STORY.

A Major loved a maiden so,
His warlike heart was soft as Do
He would often kneel to her and say:
"Thou art my life and only Ray
Oh, if but kinder thou wouldst be,
And sometimes sweetly smile on Me
Thou art my earth, my guiding star;
I love thee near, I love thee Fa.
My passion I cannot control—
Thou art the idol of my Sol."
The maid suggests his asking pa,
The Major cries, "What, I? Oh, La!"
The Major rose from bended knee,
And went her father for to Si,
The father thought no match was finer—
The Major had once been a Minor.
They married soon and after that
Dwelt in rooms all ine one Flat.
So happy ends this little tale,
For they lived on the grandest Scale.

The Original George.

George Washington was very small, very black, and very new to the life of the public school which he had just entered. His family had emigrated to the city from some unknown wilderness, and the officials of the school board had discovered little George and brought him into line with the prospects of the higher education. It was his first day, and the teacher was trying to make him at home.

"And so your name is George Washington?" said the teacher.

"Yassum. Jorge Washin'ton."

"And I suppose you try to be as like him as a little boy can, don't you?"

"Lak who, mam?"

"Like George Washington."

The youngster looked puzzled.

"Ah kain't help bein' lak Jorge Washin'ton," he replied, stoutly, "'cos' that's who Ah am."

Logic.

Kickerly—Here, waiter, what are these chops—lamb or pork?

Waiter—Can't you tell by the taste?

Kickerly—No.

Waiter—Well, then, what difference does it make?

A Chance to Make Money.

Yes, elegant free homesteads can still be had in Mexico where many Americans are now locating. You need not go to Mexico, but are required to have five acres of fruit trees planted within five years. For information address the Jantha Plantation Co., Block 593, Pittsburg, Pa. They will plant and care for your trees on shares, so you should make a thousand dollars a year. It is never hot, never cold. The health conditions are perfect.

His Last Resort.

The eminent physicians are in solemn consultation, while the patient lies in an utterly weak, almost lifeless condition.

"His nervous system seems completely collapsed," decides the most eminent consultant.

"An operation will be of no avail," observes the next most eminent.

"No," says the third. "The only hope for him is a sudden and terrific shock. That's the only thing that will restore him."

"Then let us present our bills to him right away," suggests the youngest of the physicians.

WOMEN SHOULD KNOW THIS.

Have you tried various remedies for diseases peculiar to our sex? Suppositories and cones are mostly cocoa butter, olive oil or other fats. They can't cure you. Medical Science has discovered that these fats and oils prevent the action of the medicine. You should know **why**. I want to explain it to you. And I want you to try a remedy which **will** cure—which contains no oils or fats—just pure medicine that acts quickly and surely. I will send a liberal trial, and the explanatory booklet absolutely free. Address Ella Howard, Box 495, South Bend, Ind.

A Back-Action Apology.

A negro preacher delivering a forceful sermon on the sin of theft, said:

"I see before me twelve chicken thieves, includin' that thar Bill Sanders."

Sanders resented this, and threatened his reverend detractor with a broken head and a slander action unless a retraction were made the next Sunday.

The apology came in due course. "What I should hab said," the minister explained, "was I see befo' me eleven chicken stealers, not includin' Bill Sanders!"

The Public Sets the Gait.

Winks—Don't you think editors and reporters ought to be required to sign their names to their articles?

Jinks—No. Editors and reporters are not responsible for what they write.

"Who are, then?"

"The people who buy the p[illegible]

A Woman Scorned;

Or, THE TRAIL OF A FLOWER

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER IX.

THE ROSE AND RING.

DE COURCY'S first impulse after recovering from the knife thrusts of the Countess Plass was to return to the trail of the desperate woman. Fortunately none of the blows had reached a vital part and he was soon himself again.

The body of Calledon Sinclair had been placed beside that of his long-buried wife, and Nova had removed from the Imperial to a handsome house on one of the avenues.

Thither at the close of a beautiful day De Courcy made his way.

There was a perceptible pallor on the young girl's cheeks when he confronted her and for some moments in the parlor she remained silent.

"I have come to say good-by for a time," said De Courcy. "I shall be out of the city for an indefinite period."

"I seek not to pry into any secrets you may possess," was the rejoinder.

De Courcy's gaze for a moment roved from the face before him and then slowly returned. There was something uppermost in his mind, but he hesitated.

"I shall make my home here," resumed Nova. "I have been going over papa's private papers and among them I find one intensely mystifying."

As she finished she went over to a desk in one corner of the room and returned with a little packet in her hands. This she laid on the table beside which she halted and with her delicate fingers hardly touching it, waited for her visitor's voice.

"I regret that I am not a solver of mysteries," said De Courcy, with a smile. "The one to which you refer may not be so dark after all. There must be a solution to every puzzle."

Slowly Nova opened the packet and at last De Courcy's eyes rested on an oblong box which she pushed toward him.

"The mystery lies in this box," said she, lifting her eyes to his face. Look!"

He went forward and bending over the object, fixed his gaze upon the contents of the box.

"What is it?" asked he, puzzled.

"A faded flower and a ring."

She picked up the two objects and held them before him.

"There is a singular perfume about these strange things," she said, her smile coming back once more. "Do you recognize it?"

"It is the same scent that lingered about the glove which was found on the floor in the room where your father died."

The girl nodded.

"It is the same," said she in low tones. "I believe you call it stephanotis."

"It is the perfume of the Madagascar flower."

"And the woman——"

"They call her the Countess Plass."

"She is an unknown creature to me," answered Nova. "If she was the last person to see papa alive——"

"She was the last one," interjected De Courcy with confidence. "It is well, perhaps, that you do not know her."

"But the rose and the ring?" and Nova's eyes dropped again to the box.

De Courcy shook his head.

"They mystify you, then?"

"For the present, at least."

"Then it may be as well if the mystery were never solved," said Nova.

"It shall be solved," was the response

"To my sorrow?"

"It cannot be, I am sure, to your sorrow."

"Then, you know——"

She paused as their eyes met and De Courcy, replacing the rose and the ring in the box, looked her full in the face.

"I do not know, but I think I can promise," he said and the lid of the box was closed. "Is this the only mystery that confronts you?"

"The only one."

"If you will trust me——"

"You are trusted beforehand," was the interruption. "You are one of the few friends I have now, Mr. De Courcy."

Ten minutes later De Courcy was among the hurrying throng of humanity that crowded the city's streets. The rose and the ring? In what way were they connected with the life and perhaps with the death of Calledon Sinclair? And then the flight of McQuade came to his mind. Was there a connecting link between the two events?

"First McQuade," said he to himself. "I must find Cletus. Where has he hidden himself?"

The trail of the missing man seemed absolutely clewless.

For a time he remained in his room trying to think out the mystery. He faced the window of the house opposite, the house in which he had encountered the tigress with the blade. It was dark and apparently vacant now. There was no face at the window, no dark eyes sweeping across the space and no white hands on the narrow sill.

All at once he sprang to his feet! The curtains opposite had been parted. A darkish face was peering out upon the street, a face which, despite the space that intervened, struck him with a strange familiarity and in a moment he was leaning forward, studying it with all the intensity of his being.

It was not the face of the woman of the perfume. No. He saw this instantly.

"The room is tenanted again!" cried he. "It has a tenant who is watching this house."

He seized his hat and was below in a moment.

Passing down the street for a block, he whirled suddenly on his heel and paced back. The door of the house opposite stood ajar. De Courcy did not hesitate, but opened it and pushed in. Garner, the janitor, did not confront him.

He bounded up the broad stair and laid his hand on the knob of the door which opened into the room where he had encountered the countess.

As the portal swung inward De Courcy heard a cry and then stood stock still across the threshold.

Standing before him, as if he had just sprung from a chair, was the human puzzle, Caliban!

The snaky orbs of the little man fell upon De Courcy's face like the glitter of an asp's.

At one glance downward he noticed the long arms tipped with the dangerous hands and wondered how many innocent ones they had mercilessly throttled.

"What is it?" demanded Caliban with the coolness and defiance of a cornered thug.

There was a key in the doorlock and this De Courcy deliberately put in his pocket.

"When did you come?" he asked.

"No man is my master," was the answer.

"Did your mistress send you hither?"

The little man's lips came together with a snap and his eyes got new defiance.

"You will not speak?" said De Courcy.

Before Caliban on the table stood a half empty bottle of wine and beside it lay a half smoked cigar.

"Since you have done me the honor of calling," he said at last, "I shall make your stay as pleasant as possible."

The little wretch sat down and crossed his thin legs.

"Now go on," said he, watching De Courcy like a tiger. "You have locked the door and I am a prisoner."

Was there ever a cooler man? It seemed to De Courcy that this fellow had been schooled in cleverness and that now he was playing a hand entirely familiar to him.

"A man reaps whatsoever he sows," said De Courcy, repeating the sentence which he had read on the wall of the room where he had last seen the body of Calledon Sinclair.

"Ha!" laughed Caliban. "You have a good memory."

"You traced those words on the wall in the Imperial?"

"Yes."

"They have a subtle meaning?"

"Think you so?" was the reply.

"You admit it."

De Courcy took a step forward and looked down into the face lifted to his from the depths of the chair.

"Have you ever heard the story of the rose and the ring?" he asked.

There was just the slightest start on Caliban's part.

"Ho!" he exclaimed. "So you have been delving into a life? You are a wonderful man, Clay De Courcy."

"I thank you for the compliment," said the other. "But not more wonderful, perhaps, than the woman of the strange perfume."

"The beautiful Countess Plass?"

"The black-eyed tigress who strikes when her blood is hot."

"Oh!" cried Caliban, "it was you, then?"

The face of De Courcy was lowered till it almost touched the cheek of the human mystery.

"Yes," said he. "Tell your mistress that her blows availed her naught. Tell her that the wages of sin is death."

He wondered what the reply would be. It came flashingly sudden, but it was only a defiant, bitter laugh.

CHAPTER X.

THE PATCHED-UP PHOTOGRAPH.

Within the next few moments a grotesque-looking object slouched down the street. De Courcy had found in Caliban a man worthy his steel, a slippery human enigma and a man whom he could not fathom. He had let the man out of the house in Waterloo street and had turned to the one trail first in his mind.

Dolly had received no news from McQuade.

In the night that lowered over the city De Courcy stumbled once more upon Doctor Sinelli quietly smoking a pipe in the foyer of his hotel. This strange individual was oblivious of De Courcy's presence and our friend stood off and watched him closely.

All at once a messenger boy ran into the building and went to the desk. The clerk who glanced at the message he carried, nodded toward the doctor and De Courcy saw the envelope placed in his hands.

Doctor Sinelli tore it open, glanced at the writing and handed the boy a generous coin. Then he coolly relighted his pipe and left the hotel, passing so near the silent watcher that he could have touched him with his hand.

At the curb stood several taxicabs and into one Doctor Sinelli sprang and shut the door. It was the work of a moment for De Courcy to leap into a second "taxi" and give orders for the driver to keep the other in sight.

Away went both taxicabs and De Courcy settled back to await the end of the chase.

He did not doubt that he would be carried to the countess's new abode.

It was a long chase, but at last he was hailed by the driver.

"He's stopping, sir," said he.

"Where are we?" asked De Courcy.

"We're in Decatur place."

"A stylish quarter. Are you sure of it, man?"

"Yonder's his 'taxi,' sir. He's getting out."

De Courcy looked and saw a figure mounting the broad steps of one of the finest mansions in that aristocratic quarter. Was it possible that the woman with the perfume had taken up her residence among such wealth and culture?

As he looked the figure vanished and the taxicab which had brought the doctor to that part of the city wheeled and came forward.

"What's your fare, Jim?" asked the driver of De Courcy's man.

"Never mind. It's as good as yours," was the joking answer. "He's a rich guy, eh?"

"Yes, come to see the rich lady in 999. Ever see her, pard?"

"No."

"Well, she's foreign. Had her for a fare last night. Lost her fan in my 'taxi,' and when I took it back to her she gave me a 'fiver.' You just oughter have held that fan to your precious nose. The strangest perfume mine ever hit."

"What was it, Tom?"

"Bless me if I know. But it was powerful," and with this the taxicab whisked out of sight.

As for De Courcy he looked at the mansion and told the driver to take him slowly past it.

It was a place with a broad front, elegant and ornate. He noticed the white stone steps flanked on either side by huge marble lions and within the area were pots of tropical plants.

Did the Countess Dozia inhabit such a palace? De Courcy thought of rubbing his eyes to see if he had not dreamed.

"Leave me here," he said to the driver a full block from the mansion and the next moment he was alone on the pave. To discover who inhabited this house was his next move.

Fortunately he ran across a patrolman who had lately been in that quarter in which Sinclair had made much of his fortune.

The man was communicative and when he learned that De Courcy had served the late financier he was willing to unburden himself.

"Oh," said he, "it's 999 you want to know about?"

"Yes," said De Courcy.

"That's the home of Madame King-Dupont."

"One of the '400,' I suppose?"

"None but the '400' have any business living in this locality," was the reply.

"I thought the tenant of 999 must belong to the inner circles," De Courcy remarked offhand, and then he glanced back at the mansion.

"I've seen her only once or twice," said the policeman, "but it's my business to know who lives on my beat."

"Madame King-Dupont?" observed De Courcy. "She's one of those hyphenated high-flyers."

"A golden fly, I take it," with a smile. "Aha!" pulling De Courcy back, "here comes the prettiest maid in Gotham. She's out for a spin, no doubt. She's bound for the Trocadero. Look at her. Did you ever see such hair? She's Madam's maid."

The next moment the girl thus designated by the policeman was almost abreast of them and the officer tipped his hat to her as she passed.

"The Trocadero is just around the corner," he said, addressing De Courcy again. "The girl spends her off-hours there. Got a steady? I don't know."

Already the maid had whisked round the nearest corner and De Courcy was off, too.

He turned the corner to see the maid disappear within the brilliantly-lighted entrance to one of the most elegant summer gardens in that part of the city, and when he followed her he discovered her seating herself at one of the most secluded tables.

De Courcy sauntered inside and took the one nearest her from which he covertly regarded her.

Within five minutes the girl was joined by a young fellow who said a few pleasant words as he seated himself and De Courcy without exciting suspicion, leaned forward and pretended to be consulting the elaborate menu.

"Madam's got a caller," he heard the maid say with a little laugh. "It's the little man with the wine-like eyes. He must be a foreigner. I don't like him, of course. They're as thick as two peas in a pod. I'd like to know where Madam's been all this time, for she only came back to the house last night. It is rather peculiar."

"Eh?" grinned the man. "Been out o' town, p'raps."

"Not far, for she didn't take any of her luggage with her. I say, Jubal, something's in the wind down there. She's getting ready to fly."

De Courcy started.

"What makes you think so, Mabel?"

"No sooner was she back than she ordered all her trunks packed and has been consulting the sailing lists besides."

"Goin' to Europe, eh?"

"It looks like it. An hour ago she sent for a messenger boy and he went off with a message. Then presently comes the little man with the wine-like eyes and now they're together."

"Who is that bloke?" asked Jubal.

"Madam keeps her secrets," was the reply. "I've been packing up until my hands are tired. All her finery, her jewels and her delicate bric-a-brac. Looks to me like a long stay this time."

"And you'll have the care of the house? And there's wine in the cellar?"

"The best in the world!" laughed the maid.

"Just think of it," exclaimed the man, smacking his lips. "When the cat's away the mice will play."

The maid was silent for a moment.

"Look here, Jubal," she suddenly exclaimed. "I must tell you. When Madam came back she was all flustrated. I came suddenly upon her and what, think you, she was doing?"

Mr. Jubal shook his head.

"She was cleaning the blade of a dagger with her scented handkerchief. There's hot blood in Madam's veins. I don't know whether she used the blade on any one, but I'd almost be willing to swear that her handkerchief had stains when she got through. Funny, isn't it?"

"It's past me," said the man, sipping the wine which he had ordered for two.

"That's not all," pursued the girl.

"What's the rest?"

"She's been going over a box of letters. Some she burned, others she stowed away in a little trunk. All at once she sprang to her feet and——"

"Just a moment, Mabel," interjected Jubal. "Where were you all this time?"

"On the staircase, looking over the transom," grinned the maid. "She paced the carpet with a white face and flashing eyes. I never knew a woman could look so. She held a photograph in her hand and was crying out: 'Blood for insult! The rat first and then oversea! Vengeance!' and then she tore the photograph into a thousand pieces and trampled all under her feet. When I ventured into her room, at her call, she bade me sweep up the fragments and carry them away. I did more than that. I pieced the bits together till I had the picture complete and I've got it here, Jubal."

"What a girl you are, Mabel!" cried the man.

The maid drew from the bosom of her her dress a bit of pasteboard which confirmed her words.

"Here's the man she tore to pieces," she went on, holding the replaced photograph before Jubal's eyes. "He's a good looker, eh?"

De Courcy leaned forward and gave one searching look.

It was the face of Cletus McQuade!

CHAPTER XI.

BALKED.

"You are determined, then, to strike again?"

"I shall strike! Think you that I intend to leave these shores before I have wiped out in blood the insult offered me at the ball of the grand duchess?"

The last speaker was the beautiful and stately Countess Dozia and she faced Doctor Sinelli in the handsome mansion on Decatur avenue.

About her lingered the perfume of the stephanotis flower. It seemed to fill the apartment and the little doctor looked admiringly at her and waited for her to proceed.

She suddenly began to pace the floor in rapid strides, now and then darting a swift glance at the man in the chair.

"I know what you have said," she went on. "You men are forgiving, but women never. His insult is unforgettable. I had him at my feet and all at once he turns upon me and covers me with ridicule. Not only this, but he has transferred his affections to a girl of the common people—a girl whom I had in my grasp but a few hours ago, but something came over me and I did

(Continued on page six.)

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GENTLE JABS.

Usually the man who sits at the head of the table does all the work and takes what is left.

The father of triplets is certainly in a position to realize that it is the little things that count.

Unsolved public problems should apply for an appointment with Dr. Roosevelt of Oyster Bay.

We are told that true love will conquer a great many obstacles, but poverty and the toothache are two exceptions.

In the noisy portions of the wide-open town of San Francisco the Governor's pictures are not going like hot cakes.

Capt. Butt, handy man about the White House, played a game of golf with the President and had enough presence of mind to come in last. He knew how to keep his job running along on rubber tires.

Here is good news for women who insist on wearing other people's hair. A Chinese viceroy has ordered that the death penalty be enforced against those who desecrate graves to secure human hair for export.

It gives us pain to see Congressmen posing as constructive statesmen because they are about to put over postal savings banks when it is a well-known fact that the people all but had to drag that measure from them with forceps.

Sweet girl graduates who composed poems in the form of commencement gowns for themselves thereby added much to the joy of the occasion for their proud papas. Teaching the young feminine idea how to sew before taking up the thread of life is to be commended. It is seldom that a daughter of the common people pricks her fingers on a dead language after retiring from the schoolroom.

FOURTH OF JULY HORRORS.

"Beside the booming cannon
I bravely took my stand
And I was blown to pieces
To the music of the band."

It is not to be believed that the patriotism of Americans has increased in direct proportion to the development of the fireworks industry. While the old-fashioned way of celebrating the Fourth of July by the discharge of rusty firearms, condemned cannon and blacksmiths' anvils resulted in killing or mangling numerous human beings, the devastation was limited almost entirely to harebrained men who took foolish risks. Women and children were spared. Modern intensive methods of cultivating foolhardiness cause dangerous explosives to be placed in the innocent hands of infants and young children on "the day we celebrate." Thus armed, they are permitted by reckless parents to go forth and slay themselves and one another.

It is a hopeful sign that the public authorities, including the mayors of cities, the police officials and the boards of health, are showing a genuine desire to curb the horrors of the Fourth of July. Organizations of citizens, the press and all thoughtful persons everywhere have an important duty to perform in teaching the necessary lesson that dangerous explosives have no proper part in the celebration of the nation's great patriotic festival. Statistics of killed and wounded give no joy. Communities which show indifference in this matter are put to shame by other more enlightened communities which have solved the problem of preventing the slaughter of human beings on the national holiday.

(Continued from page five.)

not spoil her pretty face. You may desert me, doctor. You may turn from me after I have, in part, made you what you are, but I shall go to the length of my tether and one man at least shall feel the terrible vengeance of a woman scorned and humiliated!"

Her dark eyes fairly blazed and Doctor Sinelli wondered if in all the world she had a counterpart.

"I have packed for flight," Dozia continued, "I shall go back to scenes of my old triumphs. I shall dazzle Europe once more, but I shall have the satisfaction of having given blow for blow and my insulter shall see before him ere his eyes close in darkness the face of the Countess Plass!"

"All for the little incident at the ball of the grand duchess," said the doctor.

"Call it what you please. It rankles in my heart and I would not be true to my nature if I did not sting."

She came back to the table where he sat and for some seconds looked down into his face.

"Where is he?" calmly asked Doctor Sinelli.

"I know! Caliban has trailed him for me and I have but to put out my hand to deal the blow."

It was the face of Cletus McQade.

"But his friend?"

"Oh, I have settled with him," flashed the countess. "I have faced him and he felt the blade."

"What?" cried the listener. "Do you tell me that you have struck the tenant of the house in Waterloo street?"

"If cold lips could speak they would confirm my words. He came to my late apartments after I had gone. I went back thinking I had forgotten a trinket and there he stood, facing me with eyes that flashed victory. It made my blood run like a lava current through every vein. I saw but him. I thought of the ball of the grand duchess. I saw the same gorgeous scene. I heard the voice of Cletus McQuade. I knew that that man was his friend and when he audaciously threw himself between me and the door, up went my blade and when it descended there was a man on the carpet."

Doctor Sinelli seemed to draw a long breath of horror and relief.

"Perhaps," said he, venturesomely, "perhaps you had best go at once."

"Not till I have stood for the last time before my insulter," was the quick reply.

There was no response.

"Leave it all to me, mon ami. I go to seek him this very night."

"What if Caliban is mistaken?"

"Just as if a trail dog like him can err," cried Dozia. "When did he fail me? You remember how he tracked the Duke of Costi, the wretch who cheated at cards at Monaco and then laughed in my face. That work proved Caliban's worth. Never fear, my doctor. He has found McQuade!"

Leaving her visitor alone for a moment, Dozia vanished in an adjoining room, to return in a close-fitting traveling dress.

"It is not very far," said she, interpreting the doctor's look. "I shall go straight to my target."

"Have a care. A hunted man is sometimes like a hunted lion."

"I know," laughed Dozia.

"All men are not alike."

"Some are cowards, but I hope Cletus McQuade will die like a brave man."

"I must wish you success. You are a remarkable woman," admiringly answered the little man. "I should not like to have you for an enemy."

A rippling laugh was the response and Dozia posed before the doctor with all the dignity of a queen.

Ten minutes later the apartment was deserted. Doctor Senelli, several blocks away, was gazing after the flitting figure of the Countess Plass.

"Borgia and Pompadour all in one!" he said to himself. "If I had her for a foe I would fly to the uttermost isles of the sea. Heaven help the man against whom she lifts her hand! And all for a crushed flower. All for a word and a look, the word spoken in jest and the look given in merriment."

He waited till the last vestige of the woman had passed out of sight, then turned on his heel and went in an opposite direction.

Meantime, the Countess Plass was hurrying toward one of the city stations. Half an hour later she had the rushing river between her and the skyscrapers of the busy mart and settling back in her seat was being carried across the sand dunes of New Jersey.

Up through the night with the winds of the country about her she made her way alone.

As if she knew the way, though she did not, for she was following the trail beaten out by Caliban, she neared Lost Haven where McQuade, in a momentary spasm of fear, had taken refuge.

The woman of the perfume was goaded on by the vengeance that cankered in her soul and now and then her gloved hands shut madly and her eyes got the old gleam of madness.

At last she reached the outskirts of the little town.

It was to her a long tramp from the little station nestling in the night, but the one desire of her heart had sustained her and the single purpose which she knew gave strength to her woman's nature.

A few lights glimmered here and there.

Dozia paused in the middle of the village and looked around.

It was a strange place to her. Caliban had directed her and her penetrating eyes told her at last where she was.

All at once a footstep sounded behind her and she whirled on her heel.

An old man who had come suddenly upon her drew back with a little cry and looked her over and over.

"Are ye at fault, lady?" he asked.

"I know where I am," was the reply. "This is Lost Haven?"

"Yes. I've lived here goin' on sixty years. I'm Joshua Turnbull. If ye want directin'——"

"I want nothing," interjected Dozia.

"Yonder's the tavern," and the old man pointed down the straggling street.

The countess started forward with a parting look and heard her late companion mutter something about a woman being "out of her head." She laughed at his mutterings.

The house where her enemy was rose before her vision.

She saw a light in one of the lower rooms and approached the porch.

She had found him. Caliban's eyes had not deceived him. The grotesque man who had served her across the sea had found the trail and she had but to go on and settle the whole affair once and forever.

But just how and where to find her quarry puzzled her.

Was he abed and where did he sleep? Was there an open way to him or would she have to resort to some finesse or fight her way to the object of her hatred?

All at once the front door of the house opened in her very face, for she had reached the porch. A woman confronted her.

"Who?" exclaimed the wife of Tubal Grane, as she caught sight of the woman at the porch. "Who be you, miss?"

The light streaming from the open door fell upon the tense face of the man-hunter. Dozia drew back a step and sought to take her features out of the light, but she was not quick enough.

"We don't keep people here," continued the oldish woman. "You will have to go to the tavern. Tubal?"

There was a noise within the house and a man almost tumbled out.

"What's the row, Hannah?" he exclaimed and the next moment, seeing Dozia, halted abruptly.

"Here's a leddy—a strange leddy what wants the tavern," explained his wife.

What could Dozia do? She had been discovered at the threshold of her dire purpose. For a moment all seemed lost.

"I want to see your guest," she suddenly cried. "I am his friend," and the lie sent her blood rushing through her frame. "Where is Cletus McQuade?"

"He is gone."

The countess thought she would sink through the solid plank.

"Gone?" she gasped wildly.

"He went away at dusk. He——"

"Never mind. I shall find him later," and with these words she bounded away, leaving the old couple in a maze of astonishment.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STARING EYE.

Not a word dropped from the lips of the figure that almost ran through the sleeping village.

She had failed. Again he had escaped her. She had traced him to the spot where Caliban had found him only to be baffled in an unexpected manner. What should she do? It might be an all-night wait at the lonesome little country station set in the Jersey woods. She might be subjected to perils, but then she had the dagger and her hand knew how to use it.

There seemed nothing to do but to go back to the city. McQuade must have changed his mind.

Once more over the wandering path-like road flitted Dozia beneath the few stars that glittered in the heavens. The cold night wind fanned her cheeks. She seemed to feel it in her very marrow. On either side was the ghostly copse and far before her the station where the trains slowed up to let on and off the few passengers whose business called them to that unfrequented locality.

Urged on by the fever in her blood the woman of the perfume kept the way.

She was almost out of breath when she stepped upon the rambling platform that ran the length of the lightless station.

Leaning against the house itself Dozia took several long breaths and screwed her courage to the sticking point. She was alone in that strange country. From a tree came the melancholy hoot of an owl and it seemed to echo in the depths of her harrowed soul.

"I shall find him!" she cried. "I shall find the man who has escaped me. The whole world has no hiding place for him. He shall remember with the last flashes of departing recollection the ball of the grand duchess."

With this she lapsed into silence and the place grew echoless as before.

Suddenly from the dismal distance came the shriek of a locomotive. The train, city-bound, was rattling forward.

Dozia took a bit of paper from her pocket and touched it off with a match.

Holding the little flambeau above her head she waved it back and forth and waited for results. In a few moments the gleaming electric headlight flashed upon her vision and the great monster slowed down before her.

She was aboard in an instant and when the astonished conductor came round he stared at the beautiful face still seamed with triumph and wondered how he came to pick up such a passenger in such a lonesome spot.

Whirled back toward the city, the countess shut her eyes and recouped her tired forces. He had gone back to his old haunts in Wellington street, back to the girl Dolly to whom he had transferred his love, but she would find him and if the girl came between—Dozia's face paled at thought of this and her fingers wound round the hilt of the dagger on her person.

Midnight had given place to the morning hours when she once more found herself across the river. She would rest awhile. It would not be hard to find her prey.

Driven to the elegant mansion in Decatur avenue, she alighted and flung herself into a chair under the brilliant lights.

A footfall came tripping down the stair.

The door opened and she was face to face with Mabel, the maid.

"I don't want you, girl!" cried Dozia at sight of the inquiring face. "I would be alone."

As the girl turned away, her voice called her back.

"You've been here all night?" she asked.

"All the time, madam."

"Who has been here?"

"No one but the little man—the man with the funny face," was the response.

"Caliban?"

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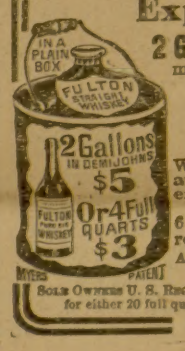

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"I know not what you call him. But it was the man with the long arms."

The countess smiled.

"When was he here?"

"He came rather early in the night. No, let me see. It must have been eleven."

"And what sort of message did he leave?"

"He was all excitement. I never saw such eyes in a human head before."

"There are no eyes like Caliban's this side of Tartarus," cried Dozia. "But the message?"

"He said he would come back."

The Queen of the Stephanotis was alone again.

She leaned back and closed her eyes. Did Caliban know that McQuade had returned to the city? Had he found him for her? Ah, what a trail dog he was!

At last Dozia rose and paced the carpet. She heard faintly the earliest vehicles in the street below. Then she seemed to remember that she had not slept.

Without disrobing she crossed the room and threw herself upon a rich couch set against the wall. It rested in a little niche and was hidden by heavy curtains.

Her white hands drew the curtains together and then all became still.

Suddenly she found herself sitting bolt upright with staring eyes and a thrill of excitement in her soul.

What had happened to rouse her? She threw the curtains apart and was in the middle of the room. In another moment she stood at the table and her eyes were fastened upon something which lay there, looking at her as if it really had living eyes.

She pounced upon this object and lifted it from the table.

Her fingers closed upon it while her distended eyes regarded it with a startled look.

"How came it here?" she cried. "Who brought it hither? It was not here when I retired. I know it well—the accursed box he bought for me in Paris and the same I gave to De Courcy after the runaway in the street."

It was the same black box which for days and nights had rested on De Courcy's mantelpiece, the ivory box from which still rose the strange perfume of the Madagascar flower.

She had not seen it since the day she sent it to De Courcy's desk and now it had come back in a mysterious manner which set all her wits to work.

With a cry, which she could not suppress, she rang furiously for the maid and that sleepy person came fearsomely into the room.

"When did this come here?" exclaimed Dozia, extending the box to the girl's gaze.

Mabel, staring with all her might, shook her head.

"Don't lie to me, girl!" flashed the countess. "You are in collusion with my enemies."

Her hand gripped the arm of the pale-faced creature and dragged her forward.

"Who brought it?" almost screamed the beautiful woman. "When did this box reach my house?"

"Madam——"

The sentence was never finished, for all at once the girl's nerves gave way and she hung a limp object from Dozia's hands.

"Wench!" exclaimed the countess. "Were I to serve you rightly I would terminate your career with the dagger. Go, traitress!" and she flung the unconscious maid from her and saw her fall, a heap of breathless humanity on the carpet. And the next moment she tore open the lid of the black box and saw staring at her a single eye traced on a bit of paper.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this remarkable story. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

CYNTHIA UNAWARES.

Cynthia came down the back steps into the garden. She had on a pale green dress, and a hat with a wreath of apple blossoms round it. Out under the grape arbor she sat down, and began to turn over the pages of a new magazine.

She had the most conscious unconscious look in the world. If she was waiting for some one, no one could, or would suspect anything. This was the idlest of all afternoons, with a book and her own thoughts for company.

Cynthia began to read a love story aloud from her magazine. Her tone half veiled disgust.

"Isn't it stupid?" she said. "Same old thing. I should think a writer might make a love story a little unusual, but they never do. Man proposes, lady accepts, then they go off and get married somewhere. I wish somebody would write love stories the way Scott did, all about ladies throwing themselves from battlements, and lovers running away with their mistresses, and making them marry them, and soldiers and war, and interesting things. I simply won't read this stupid story. Cynthia threw down the magazine in disgust.

"Hello, Cynthia." The voice came from the back of the garden where the yard sloped down to the river. The man in the boat came up the path in a hurry.

"Let me look at you. It has been two—four—six—twelve months since I have seen you. Did you know I was back in town?"

"I wasn't quite sure," said Cynthia, in spite of the pale green dress and the unconscious look. "I heard you were expected last night. It was good of you to come to see me so soon." Cynthia spoke in her prettiest manner.

"Good of me!" the man laughed back at her. "Yes, wasn't it? I came these miles, and rowed up this river, hoping to find you just as you are, just where you are, all because I am so good. Still playing we are only friends, Cynthia?"

The girl flushed. "Please don't," she said; "I will come out in the boat with you if you won't tease, and won't spoil my dress."

Cynthia picked up the magazine and carried it with her. "Stupid old thing," she said, smiling quite openly, "nothing but love stories, not a bit of excitement, or adventure, or opposition—just everybody pleased!"

"Well, that is the right kind of love story. Do girls still want young Lochinvars? I thought they had gotten over that kind of thing, and wanted to vote. But goodness only knows what girls do want; I have never even pretended to know."

Each day for two weeks the man and the girl met in the garden in the usual way. It was an ideal place, an ideal garden and the young people were of the ideal kind.

Cynthia knew it all the time. She rather enjoyed it: "It is all so exactly as it ought to be! What dull copy we would make! But then, it shan't end in the usual way. A girl has but one romance. I would like mine to be a little more thrilling. David is a splendid fellow, but, then, I have known him all my life. What kind of a story would we make? Man proposes, girl accepts, everybody pleased."

David went back to work when his vacation was over. "I shall not come back again," he said; "it is no use. At least I shall not come for a long time. You don't care a bit, do you Cynthia?"

"Yes, I do—a little," she said.

"But not enough?"

"No, not enough," the girl said, and held out her hand, and was sorry when he said goodby and was gone.

This was August. In September, the letters did not come so often. Two weeks passed without a letter, and Cynthia said never a word. She was going up to town in six weeks on a visit. She would know what had happened then.

But Cynthia did not have to wait so long.

"David has had a promotion," the sister told her as they went in town to market together. Mr. Cox has been great friends with him, and has him at his house a great deal. He is the manager of the electrical works, you know, and David writes that it is he who has given him the lift.

Cynthia was very glad, she said, and thought perhaps the extra work had affected the letters.

In November she went up to town to stay with a friend. David was there often and was as kind as ever, but this time Cynthia felt sure that there was a difference. She had been in town ten days and he had not proposed one, single, solitary time.

And there were nights when he did not come to see her, but took Edith Cox to the theater.

"It is all over between you and David, isn't it?" her best girl friend Mary Grey, asked Cynthia.

Cynthia did not so much mind the catch in her breath when she answered. "All over? Why no, there has never been anything between us—just friends."

"Don't be a goose," Mary was outspoken. "David Barret has never pretended, a minute in his life, to be a friend to you. If you weren't a romantic silly, waiting for the mysterious stranger, you would have married him long ago."

"Mary, if I ask you a question, will you promise with all your heart and body never to tell a soul, or never even to speak of it to me again? Is David engaged to Edith Cox?"

"How should I know?" asked Mary, but when she went out of the room, she smiled and nodded.

Twenty miles out on the Bardstown road, a dance was to be given in honor of Mary and Cynthia. The girls were to come out at 6:30 dinner, and the other guests were not to arrive until 9.

At 5:30 Mary's dress had not come. "You will have to go without me, Cynthia, dear; it is bad manners for neither of us to be in time for dinner. You can go down to the First street station, and a carriage will meet you at the other end."

It was not so dull going alone, for Cynthia was a town girl, and rather enjoyed the experience of arriving on her own responsibility. She took the right train and the trip took only three-quarters of an hour.

It was lonely and dark when she arrived at the shingled house that served as a station. She was glad enough to jump into the carriage waiting for her without giving much of a look at the coachman, who apologized, saying that the young ladies were so busy getting ready for the ball that they had not come down with him.

They drove on for some time without arriving anywhere. Cynthia felt sure it was long past 6. She looked at her watch. It was nearly 7.

"Are we nearly there?" she said to the driver. Cynthia had never been there before and the way was strange to her.

"I beg your pardon, miss, but I am a new coachman and may have lost my way a bit."

Up the road there was no sign of the house, and they drove back again. It was quite dark, and there was no one about, only waving trees and shadows along the road.

"Take me back to the station, please. I shall go back to town or wait there until the others come. Yes, I am very sorry, but it can't be helped." Cynthia was frightened, but she kept her courage in her voice.

Some time after they drove up to a station, but not the same station—a strange one—with the ticket master at home, at supper.

The coachman waited. "If you won't go back miss, I shall see you on board," he said.

After some time a train came along, and to Cynthia a train was a refuge. She said something to the conductor, as she got on board, and then went in and sat down, too frightened and angry and disappointed to talk.

The conductor came by and Cynthia asked him the fare back to town.

"But you are going the other way. What can you do? Get off at the next station and go back."

"Put me off there, please," said Cynthia, in a voice that shook.

The door from the front platform opened and a voice said, "Why, Cynthia Graham, where are you going, and what are you doing here alone?"

It was David, and for once in her life Cynthia was glad it was the unusual thing, the right person in the right place.

At the next stop Cynthia and David got off together. They had to wait an hour before they could get back, so David made a clean breast of it.

"I have to tell you the truth, Cynthia, though you will never forgive me. It is all my fault, your being lost and frightened. Mary and I fixed it up between us, and she is to make things right at the other end. You wanted a romance, and I could not think of anything but to take you off like this, rescue you and make you say you care— for you do—without letting you know how it happened. But it is not fair, I must tell. I have been trying to play Lochinvar. Can you forgive me, and let me take you home? Nobody will know."

Cynthia did not speak during the confession. Then she laughed and put her cold hand in his.

"How absurd you are—we are," she said.

Unaware of Love.

Some wise man, who though not ranking perhaps, with Epictetus or Franklin, was, nevertheless, something of a philosopher, once remarked: "Be sure, if you ever come to find yourself in love, that you didn't fall in." This wise man would probably laugh, in unison with lots of others, at the idea of any one being in love without being aware of the fact.

Love is so justifiably regarded as the universal conqueror that no one naturally expects his victims to be instantly aware of the fate that has befallen them. Nevertheless, quite often a girl is absolutely unaware that all the barriers have gone down and love is enthroned in her heart; and, more seldom, certainly—since men are so much less complicated, and therefore so much more readily understand their own emotions—sometimes even a lord of creation is bound hand and foot to the little blind archer's chariot wheel long ere he realizes the fact.

Of course such happenings indicate the best love of all—the love that masqueraded as friendship only and drifted on to love.

Perhaps they have been friends from childhood. For years—almost since they can remember—much of their play hours have been spent together. He is her brother's chum; she is his sister's dearest friend, They call one another by their first names and to their little world, as to themselves, appear to be just on pleasantly, cousinly—if not brotherly and sisterly—terms.

Neither recognizes how large a factor the other is in their life, or supects that love—not ancient friendship—makes the society of the other so self-satisfying.

It was a truly terrible cynic who said that no woman ever really loved a man until she had lost him; but it is one of the saddest sides to the possibility of loving and not knowing it, that the great shock which brings knowledge with it is too often the news of the other's love for some one else.

"One never knows the worth of water till the well is dry." Not until absence or loss teaches do many human beings learn to read their own hearts.

In story books and novels there is always some happy accident that tells their love to those who love unwittingly.

The hero saves his unknown beloved from a watery grave, and as he clasps her dripping form to his manly bosom exclaims that he has always loved her, and she in the selfsame moment realizes that he is the monarch of her heart, instead of merely her friend's brother and her own semi-adopted relative.

Or, maybe the hero is thrown from his horse, and as she kneels beside his unconscious form the heroine knows in a moment that not sun or moon or stars shall light the world for her until his eyes unclose and look back love to hers.

The trouble is that in real life such self-revealing shocks seldom happen at the right moment, and so it behooves both men and maidens to hold communion with themselves.

By such self-questioning only can heartaches be avoided,and the fatal words, "too late," saved from being written as the ending of the story.

Inlaying Mother-of-Pearl.

One of the industries of the French Tonquin is that of the inlaying of mother-of-pearl in precious woods. The workmen are genuine artists, combining artistic perceptions with great manual skill, even though they be furnished with the rudest of tools. Like most other clever artisans along such lines, inlayers have applied to their work much specialization.

The cabinetmakers first put together the various parts of the materials to be incrusted. The joining is done without the aid of nails and with a nice system of dovetailing, together with the use of paste, whereof lacquer is the base. From this cabinetmaker the wood passes into the hands of the designer, whose task it is to make sketches for its ornamentation.

The designs are then transferred to the wood by the inlayer, who in each case chooses the pearl that will best serve to display the beauty of the design.

The next step in the work for the inlayer is to cut the pieces of pearl into small bits and to select the combination of colors which will produce the contrast deemed necessary for the artistic success of the undertaking.

The iridescence is heightened by the use of pearl dust furnished by a kind of mussel taken from the waters of the Tonquin. When the bits of mosaic are duly selected the inlayer then endeavors to give them the form of the design chosen and to dispose of them as a mosaic in the wood. The crude morsel is made translucent by pumice stone, and the pearl is then fixed in a vise and the real labor of patience begins.

Kneeling before the vise the artisan shapes the pieces with a file no larger than the ordinary color crayon. When the pearl has been shaped it is necessary that it shall be trenched in the wood. This part of the labor is performed by the deftest hand. The bits of pearl are then set in grooves and fixed with paste. The whole is gently heated to melt the paste and so fill the interstices. The design is then polished, varnished and given the finishing touches.

Even Here.

"But I could purchase volumes of Bacon and Lamb at one-half the price last year!" protested the young lady in the book department of the big store.

"That may be, miss," assured the crafty clerk, "but you see—er—all bacon and lamb have gone up in the last few months."

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Nothing is taken into the stomach, no mask or common massage, no harmful plasters, no rollers, no worthless creams.

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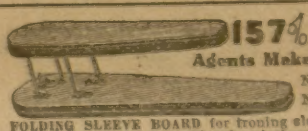

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BACK-YARD HORTICULTURE.

All morning with his flower bed
The amateur toils,
The spring sun beats upon his head
Until he almost boils.
He swings his rake high in the air
And jabs his corn and bunions,
And then instead of posies rare—
He finds he's planted onions.

The Extreme of Meanness.

The prosperous farmer was showing me around his estate.

"Hello!" I exclaimed with interest, as I noticed near his front gate a small building on which was nailed a large sign reading: "This is a bathhouse. Every hobo must take a bath before applying at the kitchen door for a hand-out."

"I had to put that up on account of my dog," the farmer explained.

"For your dog?" I muttered in a "what are you talking about" tone of voice.

"Yes, for my dog," he reiterated. "The blamed animal is so plumb fastidious that he won't chew up any hobo that ain't washed."

Two Losses.

Tittsworth—Hello, old man! What's the trouble? You look as if you had just come from a bluing factory.

Skinner—I feel that way, too. I've just lost $5.25.

Tittsworth—Lost it? How?

Skinner—The quarter dropped through a hole in my pocket and I let Holders borrow the five.

Her Speed.

Thornley—Is Miss Wurderers a rapid talker?

Dingerre—Well, she fills in the time pretty well. The other day I rode with her five blocks on a trolley car and she gave me the unabridged family history of seven of her neighbors.

His First Visit.

Hotel Clerk—There is a stationary washstand in your room, sir.

Farmer Ryetop—Stationary washstand? H'm! That's a queer place to keep stationery. Can't this old hotel afford writing desks?

The Foolish Girl.

Ethel—Is Belle still engaged to Mr. Kyndly?

Emily—Yes, but I'm afraid she's going to give him back his ring.

Ethel—What would make her do anything so foolish as that?

Emily—Oh, just her abnormal sensitiveness and suspicion. Mr. Kyndly sent her an umbrella for a birthday present and Belle half believes that he meant it as an insinuation that she doesn't know enough to come in out of the rain.

A Substitute.

"Have you a billiard room in your house?" I asked my friend, the cold-water crank, who had been bragging about the completeness of his newly erected residence.

"Why, no," he confessed with evident vexation, but suddenly he brightened and resumed his tone of boastfulness to tell me that he did have a poolroom.

His Bad Break.

The tonsorial artist had just finished amputating the whiskers of the victim in the chair.

"Your hair needs cutting badly, sir," he said, after the manner of his kind.

"Nothing doing in that line today," rejoined the victim. "But if the time ever comes when I want it cut that way I'll give you the job."

A Slight Jolt.

Sapleigh—I'd nevah mawry a stwong-minded woman, doncher know.

Miss Caustique—I can readily believe that. In fact I don't believe the woman who faces the parson with you will have any mind at all.

Not Explicit.

Tootlers—Have you noticed how eccentrically Dudester dresses?

Rootlam—No, I've never seen him dress. What does he do—put his coat on before his vest?

Got the Job.

Manager—Want to do a lion-taming act, eh? Any special training for the job?

Applicant—In my flush years I managed a prima donna.

THE ANNUAL WARNING.

Detected the Substitute.

The wise young man had ordered lamb chops in the cheap lunch parlor.

"Oh, you kid!" he exclaimed, as the pretty waitress brought in his order.

"How dare you, sir?" she retorted, flushing with indignation.

"What's the trouble now?"

"Why, what do you mean by calling me a kid?"

"Excuse me, miss; excuse me a thousand times. I was alluding to the chops. They taste like young goat."

His Only Asset.

"You look like a kind-hearted little lad," remarked the stranger as he patted the street gamin on the head.

"That's me," responded the youngster with much promptness. "I'll give yer anything I've got."

"Ah, what a noble lad!"

"Yes, but I haven't got anything but de measles."

His Pet.

Harker—Think I'll try to sell old Stuffem some pet dogs.

Barker—Useless job. All he thinks about is eating.

Harker—Hasn't any four-legged friends, eh?

Barker—Only one and that's the dining-room table.

Too Good to Be True.

Mrs. Stubb—John, this morning a man came around from the electric company and said for $2 a month he'd supply enough electricity to light the house, run the dumb waiter, propel an electric fan and run a patent lawn mower. What do you think of that?

Mr. Stubb—Well, Maria, just tell him when we want any current fiction we will go to a book store.

Profitable Boarders.

"Isn't there something queer about that boarding-house mistress?" asked the stranger. "She only wants sports and love-sick couples as boarders."

"Nothing queer about her," responded the old resident. "She's a business woman."

"In what way?"

"Well, the sports don't eat any breakfast and the love-sick couples don't eat at all."

Knew His Book.

Old Lawyer—Young man, it strikes me that you are very much attached to Miss Plainwell.

Young Attorney—She owns three hundred acres of land in Kansas.

Old Lawyer—What has that got to do with the case?

Young Attorney—Why, isn't that sufficient grounds for an attachment?

Startling.

Mr. Hardapple—Well, Mandy, I see yeou are back from Noo York.

Mrs. Hardapple—Yes, Hiram, and, do yeou know, Cleopatra's needle in Central park is over ninety feet long.

Mr. Hardapple—Cleopatra's needle over ninety feet long? Great Caesar! How long was her hatpin?

Rapid Transit.

Hiram—Josiah bet Siras a dollar that he could pick up a hornet and carry it across the street.

Siram—Which won?

Hiram—Well, Josiah got across with the hornet, but Siras argues that the hornet lifted him about twenty foot o' the way.

He—Darling, when will we be made one?
She—As soon as that firecracker goes off, I think, if you don't drop it.

His Busy Season.

The Lawyer—Aren't you going to celebrate the glorious Fourth?
The Doctor—Don't believe I'll have time, unless I make arrangements to use red, white and blue bandages.

He Found It.

"I say, Marks, where did you go on your vacation last summer?" queried the friend who had been abroad.

"I went down to Florida to look at a corner lot I bought of a mail-order concern," replied Marks.

"Find it?" asked the other.

"Sure," was the answer. "I went swimming in it half a dozen times."

Wanted to Meet Him.

Suburbanite—I went out to look at that piece of property you advertised as being a stone's throw from the depot.

Real Estate Agent—Well!

Suburbanite—All I've got to say is that I'd like to meet the man who threw the stone.

A Mere Suggestion.

Mrs. Goodwun—I wish to select a birthday present for my husband and I can't think of anything. He doesn't smoke or drink nor go out nights nor play cards.

The Salesperson—Is he fond of fancy work?

Napoleon of Finance.

"He's a financial genius. Spilt a cup of coffee over a fellow's gray trousers."

"And got out of paying for them?"

"Why, he talked the other fellow into paying for the coffee."

An Expert.

Hyker—Old man Bunk is a pretty smooth article, isn't he?

Pyker—He sure is. Why, he once sold a thousand shares of mining stock to a miner.

The Cynic.

"I wonder if the people in Mars are speculating on whether this earth is inhabited by people of superior intelligence."

"No; if they have any facilities for accurate observation, they probably announce merely that this earth is populated, and let it go at that."

Why He Was Cruel.

Tatler—I'm glad that the Humane society has at last put Goodnough behind the bars.

Chalantor—What had he been doing?

Tatler—Why, he was so excessively and continually kind to his dog that he made the poor animal wear itself out wagging its tail.

Just That.

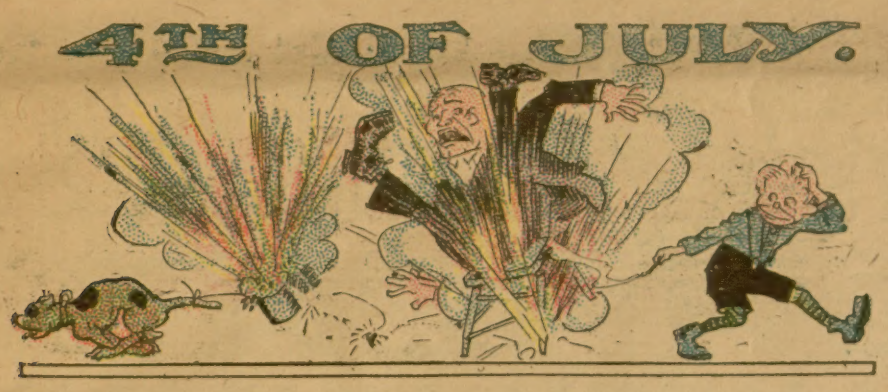
Wisher—Pon my word, old chap, you seem to be having beastly good luck, and I haven't caught anything, doncher know!

Fisher—Well, yer see, I guess it's 'cause these fish in this here brook is particular who ketches them!

What He Wanted.

"Riches do not bring happiness," remarked the party with the quotation habit.

"Well, I'm not looking for happiness," rejoined the contrary person. "All I want is comfort."



The Only Way.

The lampooners and muck-rakers were becoming uneasy.

"This literary star is becoming too popular," said one; "we must do something to make him appear ridiculous in the eyes of the world."

"But what can we do?" asked the second.

"Oh, that's easy," confided the third; "we'll publish his love letters."

Ghostly.

Mr. Stubb—Here is about a skeleton that appears in the parlor of a haunted house and strikes a few keys on the piano every night.

Mrs. Stubb—Oh, John, what keys does he strike?

Mr. Stubb—Why, skeleton keys, of course.

Why He Felt Provoked.

Mr. Recentmarrie (surprised and irritated)—What! More matches? Why, I sent up a dozen boxes only yesterday.

Mrs. Recentmarrie—Yes, dear, I know you did; but those matches were for the kitchen; I need parlor matches now.

Too Adept.

"Among other events, we shall have a sack race for ladies. Professionals barred."

"What on earth do you mean by professionals?"

"Those who have been wearing tube gowns."

Long Wait.

"Why don't you wait on a sport like me?" demanded the patron who had made

Never Had One.

Mrs. Nutes—Mrs. Limpley's Fannie doesn't seem to have much self-assertion.

Mrs. Toots—She hasn't any; that's why I hope she'll marry Will Smith.

Mrs. Nutes—I don't catch your meaning.

Mrs. Toots—Why, if she marries Will Smith, she'll have a will of her own.

Practical Girl.

Pearl—So Belle is engaged? Did she try and test his love when he placed the ring on her finger?

Ruby—No, she ran right off and tested the ring.

Redeemed Himself.

Harter—I see one writer says that Roosevelt descended from some of those old Dutch kings.

Carter—Well, perhaps he did—but he has managed to climb up again, all right.

Appropriate Name.

Ashley—Say, you certainly have a wonderfully bright parrot; I notice that it speaks in several languages. What do you call the bird—"Polly?"

Owner—No; "Polyglot."

Mere Play.

Howe—What's the difference between a flying fish and a swimming fish?

Wise—Oh, easy; one flies to rise and the other rises to flies.

Had a Reason.

"Does she keep on the right side of her husband?"

"No, the left. He's blind on that side!"

HER FIRST VOYAGE.

"Heave ho! Heave ho!" the sailor sang,
As the pretty maid passed by,
"What do you heave?" asked the innocent miss,
And the sailor bowed: "It's just like this—
Sometimes we heave a sigh!"

Her Comment.

Sapleigh—Yaws, the twain was—aw—held up just aftah we—aw— cwossed into Arizona, and I—aw—lost me head, doncher know.

Miss Caustique—Indeed! What on earth do you suppose the robbers could have wanted with it?

Two Different Affairs.

The One—Hello, old man! How's your cold?

The Other (hoarsely)—The one I had last week is better, but the one I have now is worse.

Never Hear of Him.

The Trust Magnate—I'd like to go far away or do something so that the world would forget me.

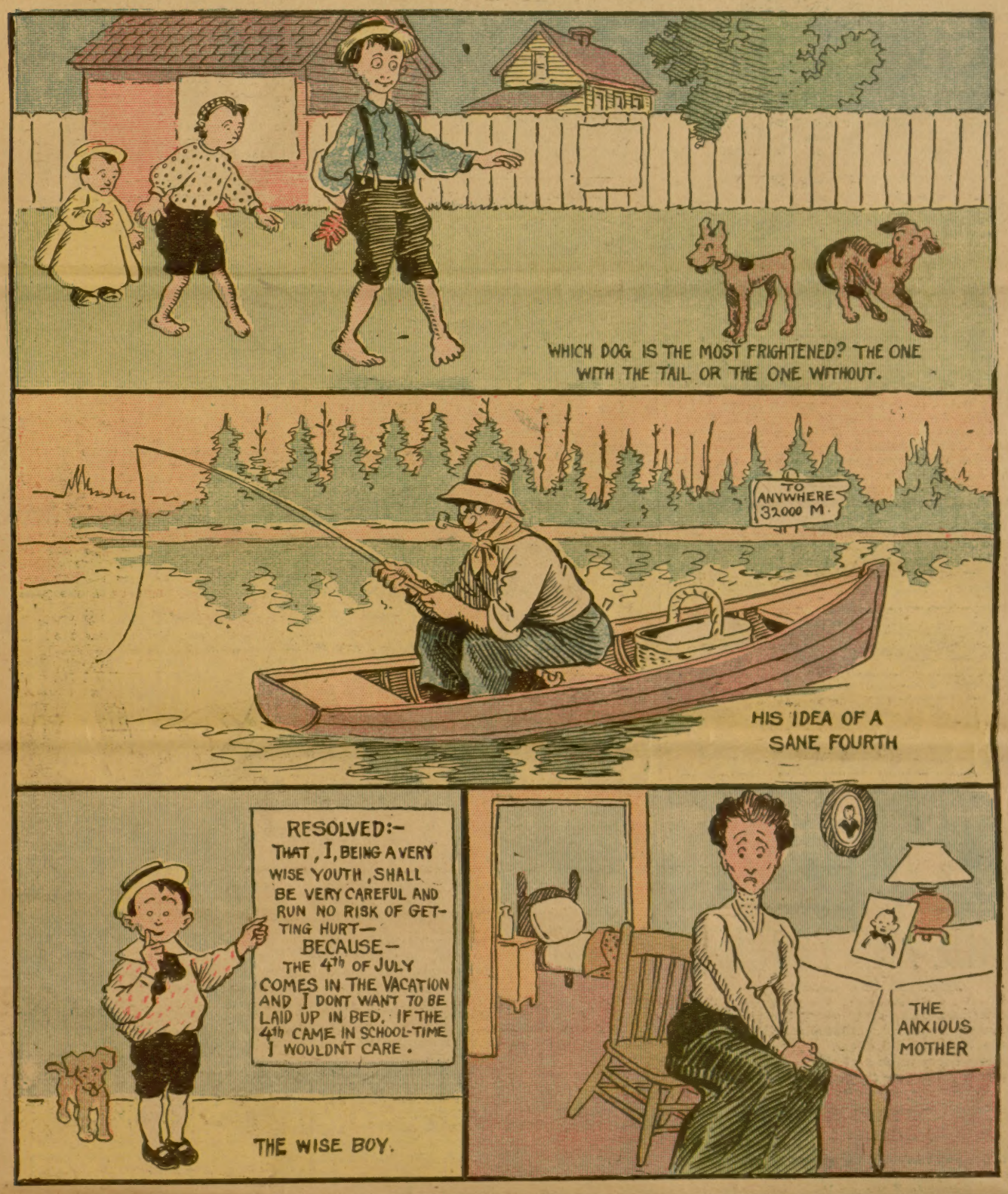
The Joker—Why don't you try to become the Vice-President of the United States?

Heard in Kentucky.

Col. Corkright—The farmer's almanac predicts a dry moon this month.

Maj. Nash (absently)—Great juleps! Has the moon gone prohibition, too?

HOW THEY WILL SPEND THE FOURTH.


WHICH DOG IS THE MOST FRIGHTENED? THE ONE WITH THE TAIL OR THE ONE WITHOUT.
TO ANYWHERE 32000 M.
HIS IDEA OF A SANE FOURTH
RESOLVED:- THAT, I, BEING A VERY WISE YOUTH, SHALL BE VERY CAREFUL AND RUN NO RISK OF GETTING HURT— BECAUSE— THE 4th OF JULY COMES IN THE VACATION AND I DONT WANT TO BE LAID UP IN BED. IF THE 4th CAME IN SCHOOL-TIME I WOULDNT CARE.
THE WISE BOY.
THE ANXIOUS MOTHER

A Long Story.

Seymour—Can your dachshund stand on his hind legs?

Ashley—Yes; but I never let him; he's too apt to hurt himself.

Seymour—Hurt himself? How?

Ashley—By bumping his head against the ceiling.

His Signal.

Daily Messenger (on trolley car)—I saw your motorman out walking yesterday. He passed a group of pretty girls—all belles—and one of them stopped him.

Conductor—I believe you; he's always stopped by one bell.

By the Sad Sea Waves.

Eva—I love to stand here in the spring and see the swells beating the sandy beach.

Jack—Yes; when it gets warmer you can see the swells beating the hotels.

the tenth unsuccessful attempt to give his order for "ham and——"

"Sport!" laughed the sarcastic waiter. "You look like a sport. Why, you need a shave!"

"Well, that's your fault if I do. I didn't need it when I came in."

Right in the Profession.

Gunner—I see MacHamm, the dramatic star, has built an airship.

Guyer—Yes, and he calls it "The Stage."

Gunner—Why did he give it such a queer name? Doesn't resemble the stage, does it?

Guyer—Yes; it has wings and flies.

Friendly Criticism.

"Do you think this poem will live?" asked the verse carpenter with the high brow.

"Oh, I guess it will," replied the critical friend. "It seems pretty tough."

Mean Man.

"As a rule," said the fair boarder, who was also a suffragette, "women have pacific dispositions and look over a lot of things."

"Yes," sneered the crusty dry-goods clerk, "look over a lot of things and never buy anything."

House-Cleaning Strategy.

Wayne—Was that a porch climber we saw over at Dobbs'?

Payne—No; it was Dobbs himself. He was afraid to go in at the front or back door for fear his wife or the cook would set him to beating carpets.

Stingless.

Dills—I sowed some lawn seed at my place a month ago, and what do you suppose came up?

Gills—Grass.

Dills—Ah, somebody told you.

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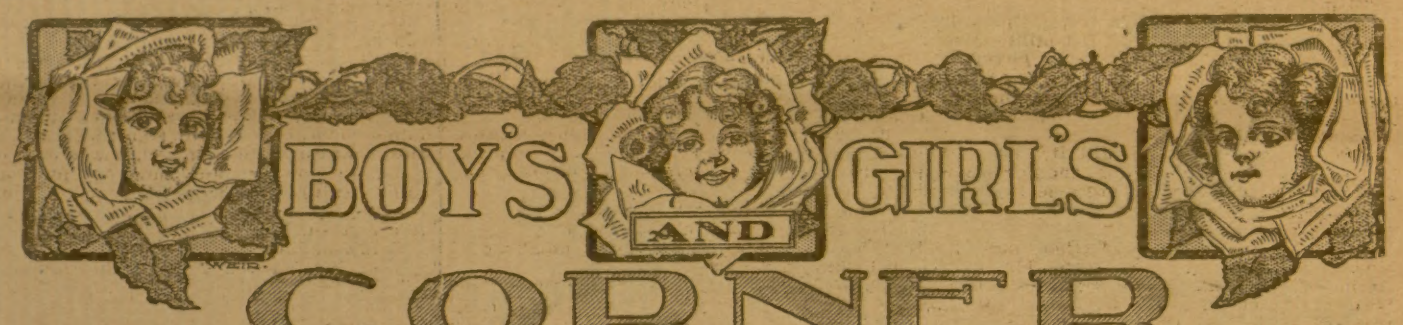

THE BOY WITH MUSCLE;

Or, A 3,000-Mile Motor-Car Race

By STEPHEN ANGUS COX

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CHAPTER IV.
A LIVELY TIME.

THREE days later, about the middle of the forenoon, Sandy Hardin got off a New York Central train at the Grand Central Station, walked through the spacious and handsome waitingroom, and out on Forty-second street.

He had a little more than two hundred dollars in his pocket—fifty dollars that the sheriff had given him for capturing Bagley and driving the automobile back to Kingston, and twenty dollars reward from the owner of the machine for recovering it and bringing it back, and one hundred dollars for the capture of Keene. The rest of the money had been earned slowly and laboriously, by working at the forge in Wilkins' little blacksmith shop.

Sandy paused on the steps of the Grand Central Station and looked up and down the street, and then across and down Fourth avenue.

Where should he go?

Sandy had never been in New York City before, and so he did not know which way to turn. He knew, however, that the best thing he could do, was to go to a hotel and secure a room, and then he would feel more at home, and could then set out to look the city over, with a view to trying to find something to do. His two hundred dollars would not last always.

He glanced across toward a large brick building on the corner of Forty-second and Fourth avenue, and his eyes caught the sign, "Grand Union Hotel."

"That will be as good a place as any, likely," he decided, and so he walked across to the Fourth avenue entrance and entered the office and approached the desk.

"I want a room," he said.

"We have them from one dollar up," said the clerk, giving the youth a quick, appraising glance.

"Give me the best dollar-a-day room that you have," said Sandy.

"Very well; register, please," and the clerk handed Sandy a pen.

The youth wrote his name and address in the big book, and the clerk asked:

"Want to go to your room, now?"

"If you please, sir. I have just got in on the train, and wish to clean up a bit."

"Front!" called the clerk, and a bellboy came to the desk.

"Show this gentleman to No. 429," handing him a key.

The boy took Sandy's grip and said:

"This way, sir."

Sandy followed the boy, and they were soon in the elevator and shooting up toward one of the upper floors. They got off, presently, and the boy led the way to a room, and opening the door, placed the grip on the floor.

"Anything else?" he asked, looking at Sandy with some interest.

"I'd like to ask a question," was the reply; "do I get board, too, or is the dollar a day merely for the room."

"Just for the room. This hotel is run on the European plan; you pay for your room and eat where you please and when you please."

"Thank you," said Sandy, handing the boy a dime.

"That's all right," with a smile. "Anything you want to know, just ask me. I can direct you to the theaters, parks, and tell you how to go to see most of the sights of the city and vicinity."

"Thank you," said Sandy; "but I am more interested in finding work than in looking up theaters and parks and so forth."

"All right; hope you'll find something that will suit you," and then he withdrew.

Sandy washed his face and hands and brushed his hair, and then he went out, locked his door and went down to the office and left the key. Then he went out on the street and took a Fourth avenue car, and rode down to Seventeenth street. Noting that there was a pretty park on the right, he got off, and was soon threading the walks in Union square.

"My, but this is a pretty place!" was his thought. He sat down for a few minutes, near a fountain and watched the birds come there for a drink and bath.

Then he got up and walked over to where he saw almost a continual line of street cars moving.

"What street is this?" he asked of a policeman.

"Broadway," was the reply, given in a tone that seemed to say, "You must be green indeed, if you don't know that this is Broadway!"

Sandy gazed up the street with interest. He thought the scene about the liveliest he had ever seen.

He decided to walk up this busy thoroughfare, and set out northward. He walked on and on, and finally he came to the Flatiron Building at Twenty-third street and Madison square.

"Phew! what a fine building!" he murmured, and he crossed to the other side of the street, so as to get a better view of it.

As he stood there, gazing up at the beautiful building, he heard the clatter of hoofbeats, and glancing down Fifth avenue—he had come around on that side—he saw a large, costly automobile coming up the street at a lively pace, and behind it was a mounted policeman, who was yelling to the motorist to stop.

There was only one person in the car, the owner being his own driver. And he was driving considerably faster than the law allowed, which was the reason the officer was after him.

When the automobile was about halfway alongside the Flatiron Building, a couple of policemen leaped out in front of it, and yelled to the motorist to stop.

He did so, and then the horseman leaped to the ground and ran to the side of the car and grabbed the occupant by the arm and began shaking him rather roughly.

The other two policemen drew near, and held their clubs in readiness for use, and they looked as if they would have been glad of a chance to use them.

The chance came quickly, for the driver of the motor car jerked his cap and goggles off and caught hold of the wrist of the officer that had seized hold of him, and tried to break his grip.

"Let go!" he cried. "Take your paw off me—do you hear?"

Sandy, attracted by the scene, as were many others, hastened across and took up a position near the motor car. He noted that the driver was a youth of about his own age, a handsome, but rather dissipated-looking young fellow. Just now his face was red with anger and his eyes were flashing.

"Are you going to take your hand off me?" he cried, just as Sandy came up.

"No, I'm not!" retorted the officer. "I ordered you to stop, and you paid no attention to me, and then when I started after you, you put on speed and gave me a run. I've a good mind to shake you out of your shoes, blast you!" and he gave the youth another severe shaking.

Spat!

The handsome youth had struck the officer a blow full in the face.

"Take that!" the young man cried. "And that!" as he dealt the officer another blow.

"I'll club your head off!" roared the officer, and he pulled his club out of its scabbard and struck at the youth viciously. It was a glancing blow, inflicting very little damage, but it forced the youth to drop back on the seat. He came up again, however, almost instantly, and began striking at the officer rapidly and with all his might.

The other two policemen rushed up and began striking at the youth with their clubs, and the young fellow was quickly knocked down in the car. The three kept on striking him, even after he was down, and this was more than Sandy could stand for. He felt that the youth had probably done what he ought not to have done, in running away from the officer and speeding; but he felt also that the policemen had no right to club the youth the way they were doing. It looked brutal, and he decided to stop it, if possible.

Leaping forward, he grabbed one of the officers and hurled him aside.

"Stop it!" he cried. "Do you hear? You've got to stop beating him!"

Then he grabbed another of the officers and jerked him away from the side of the car and hurled him toward the street. This one collided with the other, who had just scrambled to his feet, and both went down, much to the delight of the crowd, whose sympathies were with the youth in the motor car.

"Just look at that!"

"Phew! isn't he strong, though!"

"That's what he is!"

The other policeman whirled back and struck at Sandy, but the youth dodged and caught hold of the officer's wrist and gave it a wrench that caused its owner to give utterance to a cry of pain and drop his club.

"Oh, you've dislocated my wrist!" he cried. And he began nursing his wrist with his other hand, and talking threateningly to the youth.

The two officers scrambled to their feet and, clubs in hand, rushed at Sandy and began showering blows upon him. He protected himself as best he could, but was beaten down by blows on the shoulders, and glancing ones on the head, and then he was seized and held till the patrol wagon came, it having been rung for by some more policemen who had appeared on the scene.

By the time the wagon got there, the owner of the automobile was able to sit up, and he told the officers that they would be sorry that they had used violence toward him.

"I am the son of Roswell Hotchkiss!" he cried; "and you know him. He'll make you fellows sweat for this!"

"Yes, we know Roswell Hotchkiss," growled the man with the lame wrist; "but we don't care anything about him. His son has no more rights than any other man's son, and you will have to go to the station house and settle with the judge."

"All right, I'll drive my car around there, and I'm going to tell the judge how you treated me, too, and just as soon as I go home, I'll tell the governor and he'll make you all squirm, I tell you!"

"Into the patrol wagon with him!" cried the officer, angrily.

A couple of the policemen seized hold of young Hotchkiss and jerked him unceremoniously out of his car and hustled him toward the patrol wagon, he holding back and protesting vigorously.

"I won't ride in your dirty old patrol wagon!" he cried. "If you force me to do so, you will be sorry."

"Shut up!" cried one of the policemen. "You are no better than anybody else."

"That may be, but I object to riding in the patrol wagon, just the same."

"Little good it'll do you to object. You're going to take the ride, whether you want to or not. So, in with you!"

"But what about my bubble? Who will look after it?"

"One of the men will drive it around to the station house. He will observe the rules regarding speeding, you see, and you won't."

The young man was hustled into the patrol wagon and after him was Sandy Hardin, now very wide awake once more, and thoroughly angry.

As the door was slammed shut and the wagon started down the street, young Hotchkiss looked at Sandy with no little interest, and then asked:

"What made you chip in, young fellow? It was no funeral of yours."

Sandy laughed, and wiped some blood off the side of his face, where it had run down from a cut in the scalp.

"I like fair play," he said. "I couldn't stand there and see those fellows pounding you all up with their clubs, so I sailed in."

Hotchkiss extended his hand, which Sandy grasped.

"You're a brick!" the rich man's son said. "There ain't many who would go into a thing and get themselves into trouble to help some one they don't know and may never see again."

"Oh, well, I couldn't help doing it," said Sandy, modestly. "It's just my way."

"And a mighty good way, too, it seems to me."

CHAPTER V.
FINED AND DISCHARGED.

Then he asked, after a moment:

"What's your name?"

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"Sandy Hardin."

"Mine's Gerald Hotchkiss. I'm the only son of Roswell Hotchkiss, multi-millionaire. I'm badly spoiled. You see, the governor lets me do as I please and have all the money I want and it has kind of made a fool of me, see?"

Sandy smiled.

"Well, you are frank about it," he said. "You seem to realize your shortcomings, and there is considerable promise in that."

"Think so?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't know. Father has his doubts, he says; and my estimable stepmother is frank in stating that she has no hope whatever of my ever amounting to anything. She says I will bring up in the penitentiary or electric chair. There's only one person in all the world," and his voice grew soft and tender, "that really and truly believes there is good in me and has hopes for me."

"And that person?" queried Sandy, with some show of interest.

"Is my sister. Grace is her name, and if I ever do amount to anything, it will be because she is a saving grace for me. She's the dearest, best and sweetest sister any fellow ever had, and I love her. If it wasn't for her, I would pull my freight for the West, or somewhere else. But she thinks so much of me that I can't make up my mind to cause her sorrow."

"Don't your actions—like this of this morning, for instance—cause her sorrow?" asked Sandy.

A shade passed over the face of Gerald Hotchkiss.

"Yes," he acknowledged; "it does. But so long as I turn up at home once in twenty-four hours, nearly, she is reasonably well satisfied. If I were to leave home, she would think of me constantly as being in some terrible trouble, and would wear her heart out, grieving about me."

Sandy was not very old, but he was a good judge of human nature and was something of a philosopher, and he decided that there was good in the young man.

"He's pretty wild," was his mental comment; "but he is not really bad at heart. His father and stepmother are to blame largely for his wildness, I think. Probably the second Mrs. Hotchkiss doesn't like Gerald, and makes it unpleasant for him at home." Aloud he said:

"You live in the city?"

"Yes; on upper Fifth avenue. I was on my way home when the cop got after me."

"You oughtn't to speed on the main streets," said Sandy.

Gerald laughed.

"Bah!" he said. "What's the use of snailing along? There was plenty of room for speeding. The cop ought to have taken this into consideration."

"He didn't do so, however," with a grimace.

"You're right, he didn't, but—hello, here's the station house."

"You seem to know the place," said Sandy.

"I ought to; I've been here several times, before."

The wagon came to a stop, and the door was opened by one of the officers.

"Tumble out!" he said surlily. "And be in a hurry about it."

"Oh, go 'way back and stand up!" retorted young Hotchkiss. "I'm not going to break my neck jumping at your command, understand?"

Andh he got out very deliberately. The policeman glared, and he would doubtless have liked to jerk the young man out, forcibly, but was deterred by the fact that he was under the eyes of some of his superior officers.

Sandy followed, and the two were conducted into the station house.

They were given seats, and had to wait nearly an hour, and then they were arraigned before the judge.

"What's the charge?" asked that dignitary.

"This one is charged, first, with speeding, your honor," replied the policeman who had chased Gerald; "and secondly, he is charged with resisting officers."

"What about the other?" nodding toward Sandy.

"Fighting and resisting officers, your honor. He took a hand in, and helped this young fellow."

"Humph! I guess he didn't do much damage, did he?" with a glance at the youthful figure.

"Don't be deceived by his looks, judge," said the officer. "He is a regular Sandow! I never saw such a strong youngster! He threw Joe and Mike around like they were straw men."

The judge stared at Sandy with considerable interest.

"Well, well! I wouldn't have thought it," he said. "What's your name?"

"Sandy Hardin, sir."

"Humph! Enter the name, clerk."

The clerk did so.

"And you, I believe, are Gerald Hotchkiss, son of Roswell Hotchkiss, the merchant prince," looking at Gerald.

"You are right, sir," was the reply; "and I want to tell you something, judge: If you don't order your subordinates to act more like human beings when trying to arrest people, you will——"

The judge rapped on his desk, and frowned.

"That will do!" he said. "You are here as a prisoner, not as a critic and judge. Officer, tell the story in detail, and I will make short work of the affair."

The officer obeyed, Gerald interrupting occasionally and disputing the other's statements, notwithstanding the frowns and reprimands of the judge.

"You are fined one hundred dollars for speeding and resisting officers," said the judge, when he had heard all. Then, to Sandy:

"Your fine will be fifty dollars."

"It's robbery, but I'll pay it," said Gerald, drawing a roll of bills from his pocket.

Sandy started to draw his purse out of his pocket, but Gerald shook his head.

"No you don't, Sandy!" he said. "You got into this affair on my account, and I'm going to pay the fine. I have more money than I know what to do with, anyway, and doubtless you haven't any more than you need."

He took a couple of bills off the roll and passed them to the judge.

"Is that all right, judge?" he asked.

"Yes; you are discharged. But let me warn you, young man, not to do any more speeding on the main streets of the city. It will cost you a pretty penny every time you do it, sir!"

"All right, judge," lightly; "I have a pocketful of 'pretty pennies.'"

"Well, you'd better keep them," gruffly.

"Oh, the fun I get out of it is worth the money. Come along, Sandy, my boy."

The two walked out of the police station, and found Gerald's automobile standing beside the curb, a policeman standing beside it.

"Hop in, Sandy," said Gerald.

But the youth shook his head.

"Thank you," he said; "but I must go. I am looking for work."

"Work? That's all right; but there isn't any hurry, is there? I want you to go home with me. I am eager to introduce you to my sister. She'll be glad to meet you, because you chipped in and rendered me assistance when I needed it."

But Sandy held back.

"No," he said; "I am not dressed to go into your fine home. Good-by."

He started to turn away, but Gerald grabbed him by the arm.

"Don't go!" pleaded the youth. "I have set my heart on having you meet Sister Grace, and you must come with me. The governor'll be glad to see you, too. He thinks a good deal of me, even though he doesn't have time to show it. He will want to thank you for what you did for me."

"But, I don't want thanks, Gerald."

"I want you to have them, though. You've got to come." He tried to pull Sandy toward the motor car, but the youth refused to budge, and Gerald, although he pulled and tugged with all his might, could not even stir Sandy from his tracks.

He desisted and stepped back and looked at the youth with surprise in his eyes.

"Say," he said; "I begin to believe the cops were right when they said you were a regular young Sandow! Say, I'm something of an athlete myself—I belong to a swell athetlic club, and go in for that sort of thing—but I am not in it with you when it comes to strength."

"I'm pretty strong," smiled Sandy.

"I should say so! Where is your home?"

"Milburn, out near the center of the State."

"What business were you in, out there?"

"Blacksmithing."

Gerald scratched his head, a thoughtful look on his face.

"Milburn—Milburn," he murmured. "Where have I heard that name before? Sandy Hardin—ah! I have it now! I read an article in the **Herald** the other morning, telling how a young blacksmith at Milburn had captured a burglar who was escaping in an automobile; and how he that same night captured another burglar in a hotel in Binghamton. Say! you're that young fellow, aren't you?" eagerly.

Sandy nodded.

"Yes, I'm the fellow," he admitted.

"Say, you're all right, Sandy! Shake!" He extended his hand and Sandy took it and shook it, smiling the while.

"Now, you've just got to come home with me!" said Gerald. "I won't take no for an answer."

"But," objected Sandy; "I'm not presentable. There's blood on my face, and—"

"We'll go to a hotel and wash up, and then go on to my home. How will that suit you?"

Sandy hesitated. He would have preferred not to go, but he saw that his new friend was eager to have him go, and so he felt like obliging him. After thinking a few moments, he said:

"That will suit me all right."

"Good! Into the bubble with you, and we'll be off."

Sandy got in, and Gerald drew a silver piece from his pocket and handed it to the policeman, saying good-naturedly:

"Smoke one on me."

"All right," with a smile. "Good day, sir."

He was not one of the policemen who had been thumped by Gerald and Sandy, so did not have any hard feelings toward them.

Gerald leaped in, started the machine, and went dashing away from the police station at a rate of speed that was far from being allowed by the regulations.

"Mr. Hardin."

CHAPTER VI.

A UNIQUE SITUATION.

Sandy looked back apprehensively.

"You'll have another officer after you, if you don't look out," he said.

Gerald laughed.

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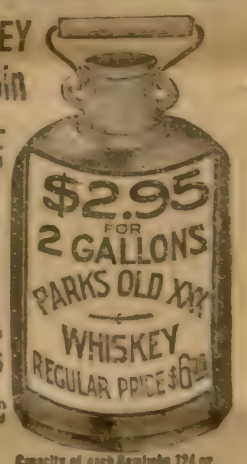

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"All right; let him come on," he said. "I feel in the mood for another race."

But, fortunately, they did not attract the attention of an officer, and presently Gerald drew up in front of a hotel.

"Come on," he said; "we'll wash up and make ourselves presentable, and I'll 'phone up that I'm coming to luncheon and bringing a friend."

They entered and washed their faces and hands and combed and brushed their hair. Then the porter brushed their clothes, and they felt better. Gerald 'phoned, as he had said he would do, and then they went out and got into the automobile, and were soon sailing along up Fifth avenue.

Gerald kept the speed down, this time, and they reached his home without attracting the unwelcome attention of any more policemen.

Relinquishing the automobile into the care of a chauffeur, Gerald led the way up the steps and entered, accompanied by Sandy, who was somewhat ill at ease in this home of wealth.

He was a boy possessed of plenty of good common sense, however, and was naturally a gentleman, and so he felt that he would get along all right.

"I think we'll find the governor in the library," said Gerald.

They were soon in the library, a magnificent room, and sure enough, a portly man, handsome and well-dressed, sat in an easy chair, smoking and reading.

He glanced up as the two entered.

"Ah, Gerald, my boy," he said, with a nod.

"I have here a friend whom I want you to meet, father," said Gerald. "His name is Sandy Hardin, and he sailed in and tried to thump some policemen who were handing me a few good ones with their clubs, and created enough of a diversion so that I was not injured any to speak of."

Mr. Roswell Hotchkiss extended a fat hand.

"I'm glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Hardin," he said.

"I am glad to know you, Mr. Hotchkiss," said Sandy, taking the hand.

The multi-millionaire waved the two to seats.

"So you have been in trouble with the police again, Gerald?" he remarked, somewhat wearily, as they sat down.

"Yes, father," respectfully, but without any showing of contrition.

The rich man frowned.

"I wish you would stop getting into scrapes, Gerald," he said.

"Oh, that's the only fun I have," was the careless reply.

"I don't see where there can be any fun in it."

"Well, there was one part of this experience that wasn't so funny, that's a fact. They bundled us into a measly patrol wagon and hauled us off to the police station! Say, I didn't like that, father, and I wish you would write to the judge and make complaint for the treatment accorded your son."

The man shook his head.

"It would not do any good, Gerald," he said. "They acted within their rights in putting you in the patrol wagon. The fact that you are my son does not make any difference."

"That's what they said," said Gerald, with a sly wink at Sandy.

"Ah, they said that, did they?" exclaimed the rich man, his face reddening with anger. "Jove, I've a good mind to go around and give that judge a piece of my mind!"

"Oh, never mind, governor," smiled Gerald. "Let it go as it is. It was a new experience for me, and after all I don't regret it."

"But, the idea of a son of mine riding in a common patrol wagon!" growled the millionaire. "Jove, but it riles me to think of it!"

"It riled me to experience it, too, but I couldn't help myself, and now, as I said, I rather enjoy the remembrance of it."

Just then a girl, of perhaps seventeen years, entered the library. Sandy looked at her, and almost gasped. She was the prettiest, sweetest-looking girl, he thought, that he had ever seen in all his life.

"That must be Grace," was his thought. "No wonder Gerald loves her!"

Gerald ran and threw his arms around the girl's waist and gave her a kiss. Then he took her by the arm and led her forward.

"Sis," he said; "I have brought a friend home with me, and I want you to know and like him, for he's the finest fellow I have ever met."

Sandy arose, blushing in spite of himself, and Gerald motioned toward him and said:

"Mr. Sandy Hardin, sis. Sandy, this is my sister Grace, whom I was telling you about."

Sandy was about to simply bow and murmur his delight at making her acquaintance, but she forestalled him by stepping quickly forward and extending her hand, which he took with a thrill of delight.

"I am glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Hardin," she said, in a sweet voice, the tones of which made Sandy's heart beat with pleasure. "And it gives me more pleasure than you can know, to hear brother say what he has just said regarding you. He doesn't seem to care much for anybody, save his own folks here at home, and I am glad to know that he has taken a liking to you."

"And remember, sis, that I want you to like him, too," smiled Gerald; "for he is about the most all right chap that I ever saw. Why, he jumped in and fought some policemen that were clubbing me—and he never saw me before or had any idea who I was, or that he would ever see me again!"

"Oh, Gerald!" in a horrified voice; "have you been having trouble with the police again?"

"Yes, sis, only this time, thanks to Sandy, here, they had considerable trouble with me. He thumped some of them pretty hard, I tell you!" and the youth laughed merrily.

Grace looked at Sandy with interest.

"Say, father, did you read that account in the Herald the other morning, about a boy blacksmith capturing a burglar who was escaping from the sheriff in an automobile, out at Milburn, near the center of the State?" queried Gerald.

"Yes, I read it."

"And so did I," said Grace, and looking from her brother's face to that of the guest, with interest.

"Well, that boy was—Sandy, here!"

The two uttered exclamations.

"I remember, now," cried Grace, eagerly; "the boy's name was Sandy Hardin."

"And he captured another burglar in Binghamton, in the hotel," said Gerald.

"Yes, yes!" from Grace. "And you drove the stolen automobile back to Kingston, didn't you?"

"Yes," nodded Sandy. "And then I came on down to New York, as I have been wanting to come here for a year or two."

"You are through with blacksmithing, then?" queried Mr. Hotchkiss.

"Yes, sir; if I can get anything else to do that will suit me better."

"Well, I should think that that would not be difficult."

"I don't know, sir. It's good, healthful work."

Gerald had been exchanging a few whispered words with his sister, while Mr. Hotchkiss and Sandy were speaking to each other, and now he said to Sandy:

"Say, I've got a scheme: I have made up my mind that I want a companion, a sort of friend and mentor, you know, to hold me down, and I now make you the proposition, Sandy, that you engage yourself to me in that capacity. I will pay you fair wages, old fellow. What do you say to it?"

There was eager, almost anxious look in Grace's eyes, which were bent on Sandy intently; and Mr. Hotchkiss, too, seemed to be interested, for he was eyeing Sandy speculatively and appraisingly.

Sandy was surprised, and he stared at Gerald a few moments in amazement and wonder; then his eyes turned to the girl's face, and something that he saw in Grace's eyes made his heart almost stand still for a few moments, and then go to pounding away at a great rate, while a feeling of pleasure went over him. He then glanced from Grace's face to that of her father. He noted that the old gentleman seemed to be eager and interested also, and he said, slowly, addressing Gerald:

"That would suit me all right, Gerald; but, you don't need a companion—at any rate, not sufficiently bad so that you would care to pay a salary for one."

"Oh, yes I do need one, too!" quickly and decidedly. "Don't you suppose I know what I want? You just wager that I do, and you'll hit it every time. A companion I want and a companion I must and will have—and you're just the chap for the place. If I get into trouble, you will be there to use your strength in getting me out of it. Now give me your answer, quick!"

Sandy looked at Grace, saw something there that caused him to decide in favor of the proposition instantly, and so he said:

"I shall be glad to accept your proposition, Gerald, if your father approves."

"Oh, he approves, all right," laughed Gerald. "He will be glad to know that I shall always have some one along with me, to help me out of scrapes in case I get in too deep to extricate myself. He has often tried to persuade me to take a chauffeur with me, but I don't want a man along, some fellow who would be uncongenial. You and I will get along fine, however, and will be great chums. Say, but I see larks by the score in my mind's eye!" and he went waltzing around the room, with his sister, whom he had seized in the excess of his delight at the prospect of having Sandy go about with him.

"Oh, do be sensible, Gerald!" cried Grace, pulling away from him. "Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"No, I think I'm just getting them to working, sis. As evidence my move in engaging Sandy's services as a companion."

"Well, that is sensible, at any rate," with a smile.

"I think so, too," said Mr. Hotchkiss; "and I shall take pleasure in paying you a good salary, Mr. Hardin. Your wages shall be one hundred dollars a month and expenses."

"Is it a go, Sandy?" grinned Gerald.

"Yes," was the reply. "Only, I'm afraid that I shall not be able to earn my salary."

"Don't you worry," with a chuckle; "I'll see to it that you earn it, all right!"

So it was settled. In less than four hours from the time he stepped off the train at the Grand Central Station, Sandy Hardin had secured a position, one as remunerative as it was odd. Companion to a multi-millionaire's wild and reckless son was about the last position in the world that Sandy would have thought of trying for—and he had secured it without trying.

Would he like it?

Well—Sandy glanced at the sweet, beautiful face of Grace Hotchkiss, and his mental query was answered in the affirmative.

He certainly would like being companion to Grace's brother.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this story of boyhood adventures. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will never regret it.

HER WAY OUT.

The card club was a very harmless one in its way. The members would, however, have been surprised to have heard it so described. To them it was many things besides.

Still, as there was no money to be lost or won, nothing stronger than coffee served, it certainly was an innocuous club. But it was something to belong to it—a much coveted honor, for to it belonged the "elite" of the little suburban town.

When Mrs. Mayhood received an invitation to join, she hesitated long. Most of the other members were better off financially. It meant various expenditures.

In the first place, their home was small, hardly fitted to entertain thirty or forty women, with fine houses and servants at their beck and call. Refreshments, too, would be no trifle. Two prizes—the prize and the "booby"—must be provided.

Altogether, it scarcely seemed a feasible undertaking, though time often hung heavy on her hands, and the pleasant company would pass many a weary hour.

She talked her misgivings over with her husband, though she knew what his decision would be.

"Why, of course join if you want to, Dorothy. I often think it must be pretty dull for you. If my book turns into one of the 'six best sellers' we'll put up a house that will throw all the others here into the shade."

Mrs. Mayhood smiled faintly. The last book had not been in the "six best sellers" class. Indeed, even now it reposed in her husband's untidy bureau drawer, after journeyings that made it one of the six best travelers, if not sellers.

"I'm most afraid to try it," she said after a moment.

"Afraid!" said Mr. Mayhood. "Dorothy, where's your courage? Don't you believe in the future fame of your husband?" he laughed teasingly. Yes, Dorothy believed in the future, but she lived in the present.

"Our income is so—skimpy," she said. "I'm really worried when I think of going to more expense. I should need new dresses, and lots of things."

"Of course, and new dresses you shall have," he answered.

So Dorothy Mayhood's name was "put up" at the next meeting of the club, voted on, and duly entered as a new member.

The turns of entertaining came alphabetically. Mrs. Mayhood was glad her name began with an "M." It would give the new book an opportunity to prove its luck before her turn came.

She soon became an enthusiastic member of the card club. She saw again all the lost things of her girlhood. That they were in other people's houses mattered not at all. She became again the light hearted girl whom Elton Mayhood had won.

She tried to make a business arrangement out of it, too. There were many little happenings, amusing and pathetic, which she treasured up and carried home to Elton, with the hope that he could use them.

The year wore on, as years will, quite careless of the fact that the new book was traveling for pleasure alone and that a small tragedy drew near, as the card club worked slowly and surely down to the letter "M."

When she was entertained by Mrs. Lacey she went home in the most despondent frame of mind she had ever known. Next on the list came Lawson and after that the "M's." There were Myers and Merriweather, but the "A" following the first letter of her name allotted to her the unwelcomed precedence.

She reached her own door, as the postman did, and he handed to her a familiar package. The tears trickled down her face as she opened the door. Even if upon its next journey the manuscript reached that blessed bourne from which no story returns, it would be too late. Mr. Mayhood kissed the tears from her cheeks.

"Don't be worried, little Dorothy. How long is it before they come?"

"Lawson comes next. After that they come here. I wouldn't mind really if all of them didn't make such a fuss over it—they all do, whether they can afford it or not. Each one tries to do a little bit better than the others. Some of them have a caterer come from the city. Some of them build on to their houses to have plenty of room. Mrs. Bunker told me she was hard up for months after they came to her."

Mr. Mayhood sat and thought it all over. He could not bear to have Dorothy mortified. At last a way out of the difficulty chased the frown from his forehead.

"Dorothy," he said, I'll raise a couple of hundred on the house." But she shook her curly head. There was a wise little plan forming in it, in which mortgages did not figure.

"Give me what ready money you have, Elton, and I'll make it do, somehow. I'm sick of people pretending to be what they are not. I'm going to have things different."

The entertainment of the card club by Mrs. Lawson was a slight damper on Mrs. Mayhood's high spirits. Everything that money could buy was in evidence. To be sure, many things were missing which money cannot buy—little heritages, for which one must go back a generation or so—but, all told, it was a complete success. Almost Mrs. Mayhood's heart misgave her.

And yet it was the brightest hostess they had ever known that greeted them when they arrived at her place. The little home was a bower of neatness and beauty, and sweet with newly-cut flowers.

No card tables were in sight. Each new arrival wondered. But when they were all gathered Mrs. Mayhood led the way to the sunny, blooming garden, where the tall hollyhocks and roses nodded as bright a welcome as their mistress had given.

There were ten tables of rough boards, which Mr. Mayhood had knocked together and covered with oilcloth. Ten new packs of cards were on the tables and soon they were all engaged in the merriest and pleasantest game they had ever played.

When, later on, refreshments were served out of doors, too, cut-glass and silver were not wanted to add zest to the dainty repast.

The prizes were appreciated for their oddity and beauty—a welcome change after the cumbersome, expensive pottery they had long known. The first was a rustic hanging basket of ferns and trailing asparagus and the winner of the "booby" walked proudly home with a rustic fashioned pot of blooming Chinese primroses.

Mrs. Mayhood sighed as they walked away.

"I wonder if they liked it," she said.

Later she found out that they did. For when the yearly prize was voted to the one whose entertainment had been best it went, without a dissenting vote, to Mrs. Elton Mayhood.

Power of Example.

"It ain't a pretty kind vorld for a poor old Swede voman like me," said Christine. "But sometimes iss a pretty good vorld anyways. I vas at a place yesterday vere de lady alvays make me iron all afternoon und den send me home mitout my supper. So yesterday I tolt her how kind you vas to me, und how you tell me set down and rest till supper get ready, und gif me money for de street car so I don't have to valk home ven I been so tired, und all about you. So ven I put avay de irons yesterday dot lady she say to me, 'Set down und have something to eat pretty soon, Christine; you not be in de vay.' Dot's because I tell her about you, ma'am. I tink lots of peoples be gooder if dey know about somebody else bein' good."

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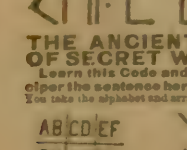

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Lords of the Ax;

Or, WHO WAS NAPOLEON KNIGHT?

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER XV.

THE CALL TO ARMS.

THE prowler did not see anything to show that he was under observation, and his courage continued good. Once more he moved. Slowly and cautiously he drew himself farther up until he was poised on the window sill. There he again halted, and his gaze was fixed on the bed.

Napoleon Knight had grown profoundly curious. He wanted to know why Anderson was entering his sleepingroom, and, feeling safe with his hand on the revolver, he feigned sleep. His deep and regular breathing was audible to the night-intruder.

Evidently encouraged, he resumed operations and brought one leg over the sill. The other followed, and he planted both feet on the floor.

The crisis was at hand, but the foreman kept up his pretense and waited. If there was a life-seeking ambition in Anderson's mind, Knight felt able to protect himself.

The prowler lost no time. Turning away from the bed he faced other things. A few feet away was a table. He advanced to this, paused, and thrust a hand into his pocket. The hand came out holding some object which he placed on the table. Then he turned again, this time toward the window.

He did not look at the bed now, but, with accelerated movements, though still stealthily, he passed to the window. He put a leg out, twisted himself around, and slid almost noiselessly over the sill. He sank lower—his waist disappeared, his shoulders, his head. He was gone from sight, but was still to be heard outside, clambering down a ladder. Then he seemed to remove it, after which all sounds died away.

Napoleon Knight remained in place. His first inclination had been to interrupt this mysterious business, but second thought gave him a different scheme. Anderson had offered him no harm and had taken nothing from the room. On the contrary, it was certain that he had left something. A new project was under way, and it suited the foreman's inclination to meet it in silence and secrecy equal to Anderson's own.

Now, when certain that he was to see no more of the "gentleman tourist," he slid from the bed and approached the table. He had great curiosity to see what Anderson had brought and left.

It was easily done.

He saw, first of all, a red handkerchief. Its ends were loosely knotted together, and the knots easily untied. He found papers within. Still keeping himself out of sight from anybody who might be outside, he took these where the moonlight would fall.

He had the documents, one and all, that the Indian had brought to Scarlock!

Napoleon Knight sat down suddenly on the bed.

"The dickens!" he said blankly.

There was no mistake. The letter that, some weeks ago, Lawyer Nettleton had written to Asa Sherwood, to inform him that he was sole heir to Liberty, and the several sheets of memoranda as to the financial value of the property—all were there.

"The dickens!" repeated Knight.

He was staggered. Why should the owner of Liberty part from his papers, and especially, if there was any reason why they were valueless, why should he part from them so strangely?

Naturally the first theory was that a plot was afoot against himself. Since the grim Indian trotted to the base of Scarlock the papers had been mischief-makers. The written apology of Lawyer Nettleton had seemed to end the discord, but Napoleon thoroughly distrusted the Liberty faction and considered them capable of any evil deed. Unless there was a scheme afoot against him, why had the documents been brought?

Clearly, their place was with their rightful owner.

But was Anderson rightful owner?

The old puzzles came again to the front. Who had the weak-eyed man been? What had become of him? Was it possible to believe that Anderson was Asa Sherwood?

"There has been foul play over yonder!" muttered the foreman. "The weak-eyed man—the real Sherwood—has died a natural death, or been made way with, and there is a plot to install Anderson in his place. Wolfe and, probably, Nettleton, father the plot, and Anderson is a willing tool. Officers of law are wanted there——"

He broke off, hesitated, and then made an impatient movement.

"But," he added, "if such is the scheme, why have these papers been parted with. Yes, and why brought to me?"

Irritated by a problem he could not master he resolutely sought his bed, but he lay the rest of the night with the papers under his pillow, side by side with his revolver.

The remaining hour of darkness passed quietly. When he rose he was his old self, though briefly besieged by the mystery of the things Anderson had so unaccountably brought. He placed them in his pocket, determined to hold to them until further developments.

Shortly after breakfast the barn-boss accosted the foreman.

"Did you sell any horses to that man—that Charley Clark of Singer Station, who was here yesterday?" he asked.

"No. He only wanted to see what we had, reserving purchase until later."

"What I wanted was to ask that you hold on to that buckskin horse that I have been using lately."

"I'll do that; the buckskin is too valuable to us to be sold."

"Much obliged, Mr. Knight. I don't remember of ever hearing of this Charley Clark before, and I thought I was well up as to traders, but if he has a good eye he would take the buckskin. By the way, he and his companions had fine horses."

"I didn't know he had any companions."

"There were two who stopped near the foot of the mountain. I saw them leave there after Clark rejoined them. Yes, they had good horses, and they put them to the test after he got to his partners. They all headed south, and—whew! but they everlastingly rode off. It was a regular killer of a race, but I s'pose they rested their horses after a while. Must have had important business to go streaking away at that gait. By the way, I think two of their three horses were owned by the Liberty men a few months ago. I'm sure I've seen them there."

"Nate Wolfe must be able to sell off a good many hoof, now and then."

This talk seemed like mere gossip to Knight, and he turned to walk away. As he did so he saw a small white object fluttering from the limb of a tall tree near at hand. It was the handkerchief that "Charley Clark" had hung there the previous day.

"He forgot it!" thought Napoleon idly; then he asked the barn-boss to take care of it. "Maybe we shall see Clark again!" he remarked.

The season was drawing near when logging operations would be resumed, and Knight wished to plan for the sawyers to begin, so, taking a few men to work as swampers on skidways and travoy roads, he went to a remote part of Ben Nord. He was busy there all the forenoon, but midday found him nearing the mansion. He advanced close before perceiving that anything unusual was afoot, but presently he was aroused from thought at sight of a group of men and women at a certain point. Excitement seemed to reign there, and he caught the sound of weeping.

He moved quickly forward, parting the group.

Before him, on an extemporized stretcher, lay Sandy MacBree, and the head of the boy was wrapped in red-stained bandages and his face was discolored.

"What's this?" demanded Napoleon, his voice deep and harsh.

"We've just brought him from the plain," said a herder.

Sandy struggled to his elbow. His eyes gleamed wildly, and when he tried to speak his words came thickly through his swollen lips.

"He got me!" cried the boy, "but he didn't have it all to himself. Oh, the coward, the thief, the knave—he got me, but he got something, himself!"

The foreman knew he saw before him the victim of a merciless beating, and his temper rose to the boiling point. This victim—this sunny-dispositioned boy who never did harm to anybody—Knight liked him well, and the thirst for revenge was in his blood.

"Who was it?" he curtly asked.

"Sherwood's man, Manuel Quesolda!"

"Why did he do it?"

"I caught him in his deviltry!" panted Sandy. "I was at the foot of the mountain, where we have those twenty horses in the round field; all our own land, you know. When I got there I found him just turning them loose; he was going to stampede them! I faced him and freed my mind. He was saucy, and I gave it back to him. Then he—he knocked me down!"

Sandy squirmed and spat out accumulated phlegm.

"We fought!" added the boy. "He was ten years older than I, and he has the strength of a moose. He got me—he did—but if you see the coward, just you look and see what he got. He will show it! He gave me what you see! Don't anybody think I am crying baby, for—I'll see Manuel Quesolda again!"

Sandy had called upon his last atom of strength, and he now fell back, gasping, in Sibyl's arms.

Napoleon Knight towered aloft, his eyes blazing.

"Somebody else will see him!" he uttered, his voice not raised, but sharp as the cut of a knife.

"Manuel is twenty-six years old and a prize-fighter," put in a cant-hook man. "Yes, and he's big as Sandy."

"He is a brute and a coward!" snapped the foreman. "He would stampede our horses and then beat a boy, would he? Manuel has started war, and he shall have his fill. Liberty claim will foot this bill!"

He wheeled upon his own men. His keen gaze swept the group.

"Jack Rantley, Dan Garley and Henri Vascour, get ready to go with me," he ordered. "Cole, four horses!"

"What will you do?" asked a herder.

Napoleon had briefly turned his gaze toward where Sandy was being borne, fainting, to the house. Now, his gaze flashed back.

"Do?" he retorted. "I am going to Liberty claim, and they will reckon with us at one hundred per cent, blow for blow!"

CHAPTER XVI.

TIMBER AND TORCHES.

The divisional fence between Ben Nord and Liberty claim had no gate and no break. There had always been a tacit understanding between the two lords of the ax that when their impromptu calls were made they should pass around the lower end of the obstruction, but a new precedent was established that day.

Four men, mounted on the best horses that Ben Nord could master, went sweeping northward with four stalwart riders in the saddles. They crossed the Ben Nord lands at a gallop, and, reaching the fence, took it at flying leaps like steeplechasers in full swing.

Five minutes later those who were out of doors at Liberty claim saw Napoleon Knight and his men come speeding across the fields. They drew up before the door with abruptness that sent the turf flying from the shod feet.

An aged house-servant was sunning himself close at hand, and him Knight addressed peremptorily.

"Where is Sherwood?"

"He?" quavered the man. "Oh, I don't know where Mr. Sherwood is. He has been away on business all day."

"Where is Nate Wolfe?"

"He's away, too. Been gone two days now."

"Are you lying?" demanded Napoleon sharply.

"No, no—it is true. I swear it!"

"Who is in charge here?"

"Well, in a way I suppose I am!"

The last words were in a new voice, lazily deliberate and manifestly intended to be tantalizing. Knight turned to one side and saw Dick Ellett. Knowing that the man stood second to nobody but Wolfe of the Liberty hands, Napoleon accepted the statement without question.

"Where is Manuel Quesolda?" he demanded.

"Manuel?" repeated Dick, still lazily. "Oh! I don't know—pottering around somewhere, I reckon."

"There is something for him to do besides potter."

"What?"

"Take his medicine!"

The words shot at Ellett like so many bullets, and his laziness had a fall. He had assumed the manner for effect, but it was not a success, and he straightened himself up suddenly. He read business in this foreman from Ben Nord.

"Produce Manuel!" added Knight briefly.

"What for?"

"Do you know what has happened?"

"To save time I'll admit that Manuel told me he had trouble with one of your men——"

"One of our 'men!' With Sandy MacBree, you mean, a boy in years. Manuel beat him mercilessly; the act of a brute and coward. I am here to square the account. Produce Manuel!"

"What will you do with him?"

"Make him pay the debt! Sandy shall be avenged. Will you show Manuel to me?"

Now, it happened that Dick Ellett had full supply of temper and pluck, and he waxed angry. The peremptory manner of the Ben Nord man did not please him. Angry he was, but he gave heed to prudence, and under a grim exterior he mined for pacific words and found them.

"Say, Knight, why not wait until Sherwood or Wolfe come around before you say more about this? Sherwood is boss here, and it's his business to settle matters——"

"I consider it my business to settle this case. Where is Manuel?"

"Not being Manuel's keeper, I can't account for him. That's my final word. See Sherwood!"

"My hunt is for Manuel, not Sherwood. Dick Ellett, if you've got a grain of right feeling in you, consider the case. Manuel was about to slip our horses from the lot—an act of out-and-out malice. The MacBree boy happened on him and remonstrated; then Manuel fell upon him and beat him wickedly. It was the act of a coward, and you make a mistake if you back him up. How is it?"

"See Sherwood!" repeated Dick indifferently.

"Will you tell me where Manuel is?"

"Frankly, I won't!"

Just then a lumber-jack appeared at Napoleon's side. This man, on the previous day, had fallen into trouble. Recklessly striking a horse with a logging-chain, he had driven the swamp-hook against its leg in such a way as to cause a bad wound. Ellett discharged him on the spot. Now, the man was about to leave Liberty, and he was angry. Chance for revenge was open to him.

"Mr. Knight," he said, "if you want Manuel, go to the top of the mountain! He knows he is in for a muss, and he's hid up there!"

If this statement had been doubted, the curse that Dick flung at the speaker would have removed the doubt. Napoleon sent a

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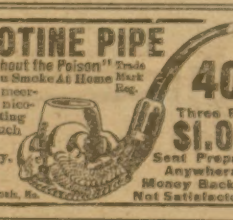

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glance mountainward. He thought swiftly and turned to his men.

"Come!" he directed; and then the Ben Nord quartette went galloping back as they had come.

Henri Vascour had grown excited.

"Mr. Knight, what you do about Manuel—hein?" he demanded.

"Pay him one hundred per cent!" tersely replied the foreman.

"You beat him as he beat Sandy—hey? If it be so, let Henri do the leetle job! Parbleu! but Henri is the boy for that work! Voila—I studied ze manly art of ze feest in Quebec with a master-boxer. Say, camarde, shall leetle boy Henri punish Manuel—hein?"

"We will see!"

Henri thrilled with enthusiasm, but Napoleon remained coldly calm. He was riding homeward and planning as he went. He knew that he had no easy task to run the Mexican down. The top of Scarlock was wide and intricate, furnishing many good hiding places. Again, if the Ben Nords intruded there it was possible that Dick Ellett would rally his own men and order Knight to keep off. The latter, placed as a trespasser, would have no agreeable task ahead of him. Law would be with Dick, and, if both parties persisted, there would be war on Scarlock.

"It will be a tough job to get him out of that forest!" remarked Dan Garley.

"There's a way to do it," said Knight deliberately.

"How?"

"With fire!"

Henri laughed merrily and shouted his approval, but Garley looked at Jack Rantley and shook his head.

"It's a desperate game!" he whispered.

"Sure," agreed Jack, "but Sandy is son of our boss."

It was a desperate game. For years men had talked about what could be done by applying the torch to rival property, but it was a resort never seriously entertained. To reduce the magnificent timber-land to blackened sticks was to give a fortune to the flames and strike a blow that staggered the imagination.

"The wind is just right to sweep Sherwood's property!" added Dan soberly.

The riders went on, took the fence as before, and galloped to the MacBree mansion. Napoleon called to one of his men.

"Get me the five best dogs we have!" he ordered.

Ten minutes later twenty men went riding up Scarlock, and with them went the dogs in leash. Some of the men were serious and some enthusiastic—the foreman, alone, was strictly calm. He had work to do that day. The Liberty men were to be punished for their sins. The pacific advice of Doctor Mason was forgotten. Napoleon Knight had declared war.

They rode as far as the lay of the land would permit and then, abandoning their horses, began to clamber on foot. They were now in their own timber, with rough ground ahead. They toiled up, seeking the summit of Scarlock, and fanned by the south wind that was blowing stiffly toward the Sherwood property. Clearly, Manuel would not hide in the lower timber; his natural refuge would be in the thicker, more tangled area.

Finally Knight paused. The actual crest of the mountain was but half a mile away, and he was at what he considered the proper gate to Liberty timber. It was his plan to invade that property and, as soon as possible, get the dogs on the trail.

They passed the blazed line that old Zeke Dalton had made years before and were on Third Acre. They went farther and arrived at the trees blazed by MacBree. To go beyond was certain intrusion, but the foreman was ready to take the risk. He pressed forward and had reached a tall pine with a broad blaze when a man stepped into the path.

It was Dick Ellett.

"Better stop right here!" advised Sherwood's man, and his manner was pugnacious.

"We will not stop!" retorted Knight.

"Then we will stop you! Look you here, sir, I happen to be in charge of Liberty claim today. I will defend Sherwood's lands from trespass, or shoot the man who tries to enter. Is that clear?"

It was decidedly clear, and the group of men back of Dick accentuated his threat. Weapons bristled there, and the men stood twice the Ben Nord number. In a way Napoleon had made a mistake in taking so few of his followers, but even he was not radical enough to think of pitting the rival hundreds of the two claims in open battle. He did not regret that he had but twenty backers—he had another weapon than slaughter of human beings.

"Ellett," he said calmly, "don't you do anything you will regret later. We are in the right in this matter. Had Manuel stampeded our horses he would have made us long work, and some might never have been found again. Sandy interfered, and then that brute beat him——"

"I don't defend Manuel, but Sherwood is the man to deal with you. He's away—the devil only knows where and why—and I am in charge. I'll do my duty. See here, now, wait until Nate Wolfe or Sherwood comes back. Don't let us have trouble. Wait!"

"Wait?" retorted Napoleon. "And give Manuel chance to escape permanently? Why, man, if I waited he would never be found by us, and justice never be done to him. No—I will have him now. Make way!"

"We will not make way!" exclaimed Ellett resolutely. "No, and there shall be no trespassing here. Keep back, or we shoot!"

Two determined men faced each other, and they expressed their views as only such men can. The issue was clear-cut and as clearly stated. They talked until Knight saw the folly of words, and then he sprang his master-stroke.

"For the last time, make way!" he ordered. "Unless you let us pass and secure Manuel, I will fire your timber. Look it straight in the face! There is half a million dollars of timber here. If it is destroyed Asa Sherwood is a beggar. Shall I fire it?"

"What good would it do?"

"I'll have Manuel out of that timber, dead or alive!" swiftly cried Knight.

"All right—fire away!"

Right there Dick Ellett made a mistake. He knew he had to deal with a stubborn man, but he did not dream that Napoleon would have the madness to put Liberty claim to the torch. Believing that he had heard a mere "bluff," he decided to treat it with what he thought was deserved contempt. Thus, actuated by his want of right perception, he flung his defiance and turned toward his followers.

"Is that your final decision?" sharply asked the foreman.

"Yes. Fire away!" and Dick moved away in the dusk of the trees and the darkness of his mistake of judgment.

"Back a little ways!" directed Knight. "We will soon settle this!"

He walked with his head high and his eyes ablaze. The dream of weeks was coming to the point of actuality—in imagination he already saw Liberty claim a land of blackened sticks and Asa Sherwood a beggar. Triumph swelled within him, and he had no mercy. He looked at his strong-armed men. They were enough for his purpose—so he thought.

Enough? Better for him if he had only one man there, and that one Doctor Mason, the man with the steady, penetrating gaze and the ability to sway the mind-oppressed foreman to milder thoughts. But Mason was not there.

Napoleon gathered his hands and scanned the acclivity.

"We want to start the blaze in a dozen places at once," he said deliberately. "When done, it must be impossible for them to check it. We will string a line of men up and down, and then all shall act as one, at my word. How are we fixed for matches?"

Pockets were searched, and plenty were found.

"We will ignite torches," pursued the master-incendiary. "A little paper would come into play——"

He searched his pockets. From one he brought out a red handkerchief, and as it fluttered loosely in his hand several papers fell to the ground. He stooped and picked them up. He had the letter that, weeks before, Lawyer Nettleton had written to Asa Sherwood to notify him that he had hetred Liberty claim, and the memoranda that had been with the letter.

"Bah!" muttered Napoleon. "Riches take on wings. With one touch of my hand I will ruin Sherwood!"

He thrust the documents back into his pocket, for his followers, acting in concert, had gathered all that was needed for their purpose—light twigs and resinous pine torches.

"Good!" he commented. "Now, form the line. Wait—do you see that conspicuous white rock a quarter of a mile above? That will be my station. Let no man strike fire until I appear on that rock and wave my hand. When I do this, act as one. Hurry along the line with the torches, and we will wrap Scarlock in flames. To your stations!"

They scattered and, standing each man as had been directed, looked up the acclivity. They could no longer see their leader, for the towering timber—the pride and glory of Scarlock, and wilderness of perpetual green that was a princely fortune as it stood—this serried army of trees hid him.

But they looked at the white rock and waited.

A few minutes passed—then the line of torch-holders stirred abruptly.

Napoleon Knight appeared on the rock!

CHAPTER XVII.

WAGON AND SOMETHING ELSE.

Napoleon Knight walked out on the rock, his steps elastic, his face composed, his mind serene. The rock lifted its ragged head above the trees that were like piled-up gold dollars to Asa Sherwood. Standing there the Ben Nord foreman could see several of his men who waited with torches, but the pines were thick and all were not visible. He knew, however, that all could see him. He had but to make a motion with his hand and Liberty claim would be given to the torch.

He was ready, and there was no visible reason for delay. The muscles of his arm contracted and the fraction of a second would have seen the arm raised, but something checked the motion.

"Stop, stop!"

It was not the voice of a man. The bidding was high-pitched, but soft and musical.

Napoleon Knight's muscles relaxed. He turned his head and looked at the base of the rock.

Sibyl MacBree was there!

"What—would you do?" she panted.

"Drive the devil and Manuel out of yonder timber!" was his swift response.

"But how—how?"

"By giving Liberty claim to the torch!"

"No, no—oh! no, do not do a deed so appalling! Oh! Mr. Knight, do not think of it!" she implored.

"Miss MacBree, Sandy lies suffering from the blows of a brute, and the brute hides in that timber!"

"But you would ruin Asa Sherwood?"

"What is Sherwood to me—what is Liberty claim to me?" retorted Napoleon Knight.

"What is honor to the MacBrees?" cried the girl, half-sobbing.

"What is honor to the men over there? Nothing! They know no such thing. Pardon me, but my men wait with the torches——"

"Stop them—extinguish the torches! No, no—do not repeat your threat. I have come here to stop what Fergus MacBree would never approve of——"

"I am master here now!" was the inexorable response.

"But I wish the timber saved. Oh! for my sake—for my sake, change your purpose! It would be sacrilege to fire the timber. Stay the torches—for my sake!"

The muscles of his face quivered. He looked down. At the foot of the rock stood Sibyl, fair of face and sweeter than the breath of the pines, and her arms were upstretched as she pleaded.

"You would ruin the Liberty property!" she added. "Think what that would be! What if you were Asa Sherwood?"

Napoleon Knight started. Another person had made the same plea days before—a calm-eyed physician who had seemed to look into the foreman's mind as if it were a transparent fountain.

"Remember!" she went on, "I am Fergus MacBree's daughter. In his absence I speak for him. He would not have this so. Spare the timber—for my sake!"

The battle-fire died out of Knight's face. If Doctor Mason looked into his mind, Sibyl looked into his soul and sent her plea there. He pressed a hand to his forehead, sighed, and—Liberty was saved!

"But what shall we do?" he asked. "Sandy has been cruelly used, and if a little time is allowed his assailant, he will escape——"

Sibyl underwent a swift change. As if she had caught the battle-fire as it deserted Knight, she became aggressive, implacable and zealous. She turned to the rival property.

"March yonder and seize that man!" she cried, her voice ringing bell-like.

"But they have double our number——"

"What of it? We will go all the same. A MacBree shall not be stricken and go unavenged. With my father ill, I am the MacBree—the Macbree! Call your men—we go to seize that brute! I will lead!"

She paused a moment, and then vehemently added:

"No man can do harm to Sandy and go clear!"

There was a great crashing in the bushes off to the north and a man came plunging toward the rock. It was Dick Ellett, panting, wild-eyed and white of face. He realized, at last, that the threat to apply the torch had been no idle menace, and his mind was staggered by the magnitude of the design. He waved a hand to Knight and shouted thickly:

"Stop them, stop them!" he implored. "If they set fire loose, Liberty claim is ruined. Bid them put out their torches, and we will give Manuel up!"

Napoleon saw the opportunity and grasped at it quickly.

"Bring him forward!" was the foreman's sententious command.

"We will. We didn't know, before, just where he was hid, but we have found out. It is in a rocky den only a few rods from here. My men have surrounded him, and we will have him out——"

Knight heard no more. When Dick pointed he had looked to the north, and a strange sight was presented to his view. From his elevated position he saw a steep ledge with encompassing trees, and at its foot, the margin of a place not further open to his scrutiny. But over this hidden spot a man was to be seen hanging by one arm from an outstretched limb. More, he recognized the man, and he grew amazed.

It was Henri Vascour!

An instant longer the agile Frenchman dangled, and then he deliberately released his hold and dropped out of sight. The bay of a dog followed, and other sounds that told that something was happening just where Henri had dropped.

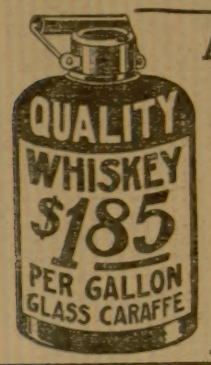
Napoleon slid from the rock and addressed Ellett.

"Come!" he directed.

Progress was slow, but both men finally reached the spot. Unusual sounds were rising from a den among the rocks, but nobody was visible. Knight and Dick looked at each other.

"Is it a panther?" asked Ellett wonderingly.

The foreman remembered Henri's ambi-



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tion to test his first knowledge upon Manuel.

"Yes," he grimly returned, "and he has got his meat!"

Then the sounds ceased, but presently Henri swung lightly out from between two tall rocks. He saw his foreman, and, first passing his hand across a bruise on his forehead—his only visible hurt—he laughed and snapped his fingers joyously.

"Parbleu!" he cried, "they know how to teach ze fist-fight in Quebec! Sandy boy need not cry out for satisfaction longer. Voila! Manuel met a man, this time. Sauce for zat goose is sauce for those gander—hein?"

"Good boy!" commented Knight, and then he entered the depression.

Manuel was there, flat on his back. No great crime had been committed; Manuel was alive, and he had no broken bones, but the avenger had done his work scientifically and well, and Manuel furnished the proof. Napoleon looked, and then turned and faced Ellett, smiling grimly.

"Speaking for myself, alone," he said, "I am content. I will start no fire. That's all, Dick!"

Retracing his steps he soon met Sibyl. He nodded, and then, as she was looking at him in anxiety, briefly stated that the problem of the day had been settled to the satisfaction of all concerned—unless it might be, Manuel was an exception.

Napoleon summoned his men, after which the party went down Scarlock—Sibyl, the men and the dogs. Henri Vascour bubbled over with enthusiasm, and he told his story to his comrades with native gayety.

"It was like this, mes enfants!" he explained. "I have zat dog Hitty in leash, and she pull at ze cord like ze—vat you call him—ze blue blazes; so I think I give her slack. She drop her nose—so—and she sneef, sneef—ah! what a smeller she was—hein? Oh, the darling, she takes me to the den where Manuel was, and then—voila! I do the rest!"

Sibyl appreciated the heed the foreman had given to her pleas, and she talked pleasantly as she rode by his side, but he seemed to be intent on other things, and she finally dropped conversation. As they neared the mansion, however, he abruptly aroused.

"Miss MacBree," he said, "I came near making a serious mistake today. Had I fired Liberty timber it would have been a great injustice. Our grudge was against Manuel, but if I had carried out my mad idea I should have stricken Asa Sherwood. That would have beeen punishing the wrong man—yes, and the innocent. Yes, again, and my mistake would have been a crime. I thank you for checking me. I will try not to make another break like that."

"Mr. Knight," she returned, "we all appreciate your loyalty to Ben Nord, and now we have seen your kindness to poor Sandy, but, whatever happens, never again think of setting fire to the timber. It would ruin Sherwood!"

"Yes," the foreman agreed, but his serious period had departed, and he did not seem to care for Sherwood's prosperity any more than before.

Reaching the house they found that Sandy was resting comfortably. Better yet, the nurse whom Sibyl had left in charge of Fergus MacBree reported that the lord of the ax showed highly favorable symptoms, and the atmosphere of Ben Nord cleared not a little.

Napoleon Knight plunged into business as zealously and as calmly as if nothing unusual had happened that day. He was busy until suppertime. Afterward, going out, he was accosted by Jack Rantley.

"Say, Mr. Knight," remarked the man, "I feel that you should know there is a wagon over by the triangle grove with two men and some casks."

"What do you mean, Jack?"

"Whisky-peddlers. You've heard of them before?"

"No; what about them?"

"Why, for years there have been two fellows who skulk across country with a wagon and whisky, and sell it on the sly. Of course, the men on Ben Nord have something to drink, and the boss has never frowned upon it, if they keep within bounds; but there are lumber-jacks and others who will get to be brutes if they have all they crave. Because of this MacBree has always frowned upon the peddlers, but they will sneak around, now and then, and sell on the sly. These are the men now over by the triangle grove."

"They are the men who will get off the Ben Nord flying!" retorted the foreman.

He walked straight to the grove. It was large and thick, but he had no great trouble in finding what he wanted. First, he discovered some of his men, sitting in affectionate communion with the divers bottles and jugs; and then he saw two other men standing by a pair of mules a trifle farther on. The mules were attached to a wagon.

The whisky-purveyors were discovered, but Knight wanted proof that they carried illicit goods before interfering. He had not yet been seen, so he made a detour and gained the rear of the party. The canvas-covered wagon presented a wide extremity, and the flap was raised. Still unseen, he walked forward and gazed within.

He saw other canvas there, and, partly hidden under it, several casks. With his men drinking close at hand he did not need to ask what was in the casks. A grim smile began to overspread his face, but it died away swiftly. In his survey he had raised his gaze to the inner side of the canvas covering of the wagon. He started like one under a blow.

On the canvas was a red smear, and it had peculiar shape.

Seeing, his head swam and he clung to the wagon weakly.

"The red crescent!" he whispered.

A few minutes later he was in conversation with the owners of the wagon, but they talked without angry words.

The following morning, when Napoleon Knight was wanted, he was not to be found on Ben Nord.

The continuation of this most romantic story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. It leads to very strange and fascinating situations. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

NELLY'S ROBBER.

The telephone office at Bound Brook closed at midnight. After that hour the villager who wanted the doctor, or the farmer who wanted to inquire what the price of potatoes would be next day, had to depend on other resources.

Miss Nelly Hampton, daughter of a widow, whom everybody in the village knew and respected, was one of the two operators. One week she would be on day duty, and the next week at night.

The telephone office was opposite the post office, on the main street of the village. After ten o'clock very few persons were astir, and there were so few calls that the night girl could put in most of her time with a book or her fancy work.

On this particular night, the month was June, the weather balmy, and the moon made the street almost as light as day. It flooded into the office until there was no need of a lamp. Miss Nelly turned out the light and sat by the window.

After half past ten the village grew so quiet that she became drowsy and might have indulged in a catnap had not her half-closed eyes suddenly lighted on a man walking in the middle of the street. He had rubbers over his shoes, and moved as noiselessly as a ghost.

Leaning out of the open window, the girl saw the stranger pass along for a block, and after a halt of three or four minutes turn and retrace his steps. She drew in her head and moved back a little and presently she saw him at the front door of the postoffice.

It was the village postoffice and grocery combined, with its windows defended by wooden shutters. The man left the shutters alone and gave all his attention to the door. It was certain that he was a robber, and the girl found herself trembling as she watched.

There was no watchman in the village, and the constable had no telephone in his house. The county sheriff was at Medina, eight miles away, and even if the girl had called him up he would be too late.

The fellow had the door open in five or six minutes and had disappeared inside. The night was so still that the ring of a telephone call would reach his ears, in which case he might come running out and take revenge. He had only to come up an outside stairway to be in the office.

On a table in the room sat a glass bottle in which the other girl had brought cold tea for her lunch. Miss Nelly promptly picked it up and hurled it through the open window half way across the street. It fell on the gravel and made a great smashing noise.

The sound reached the robber's ears, and he came out on the run and was soon out of sight. He had no time to steal anything, as an examination next morning showed, but the sheriff came over to see about it.

Dick Strothers was not yet 30. He had started in law, but the reformers had nominated and elected him sheriff almost against his will. It was necessary for him to interview Miss Nelly, and when he found her so pretty he secretly congratulated himself on having this opportunity.

It took only fifteen minutes to obtain all necessary information, but still he lingered. The girl had described the robber's height—his prying open the door—his panicky departure and her own feelings, but the sheriff looked as wise as an owl as he said:

"Very clear—very clear, but we must not neglect the slightest clew, you know. Did you notice the color of the man's eyes?"

"He was too far away."

"Just so. Did he have a limp?"

"I can't say that he did."

"And you are sure that he was a stranger?"

"I did not recognize him, but it may have been some resident of the village in disguise."

"Just so, Miss Hampton—just so. You have been very lucid in your descriptions, but I may have to see you again."

When he had departed Miss Nelly wondered why he would have to see her again and the thought was rather pleasant than otherwise.

In a couple of days he brought a lame old tramp over for her to identify. The Weary couldn't have run a rod to save his neck. No; he was not the man, and he was turned loose and told to go west and found a town.

This was not all, however.

"Would you say that the robber had had the idea in his mind for some time?" blandly asked the sheriff.

Miss Nelly couldn't be sure.

"Did he have on goggles, or only plain spectacles?"

She couldn't positively say.

"Did he have a finger or a thumb missing from either hand?"

"He might have had."

His eyebrows? Did Miss Nelly notice them particularly? If the right man, with the right eyebrows, be brought before her could she identify him and them?"

She was doubtful.

"Very well, Miss Hampton. You have given me many valuable clews, but it is possible that I may have to call again. I must compliment you on your coolness and bravery."

Why should the sheriff want to come again? The girl asked herself the question, recalled what a manly man he was, and then looked into the mirror and blushed a trifle. Then she said to herself that it was his duty to get all the information he could to lead to an arrest; and it certainly was her duty to aid him.

Two days later the sheriff appeared again. He had heard of a mysterious man on horseback. Did this robber first appear mounted on horse or mule? Did he dismount and hitch his horse to a post like an honest farmer? Did he mount again when departing?

Miss Nelly was sure that he arrived and departed on foot. She was so sure that she smiled at his question.

Did she think he belonged to the Black Hand, or was a straight-haired American working the job on the American plan?

Really, now, but come to think it over there was something in his gait to remind her of a Highland Scotchman, but she didn't feel like saying that he was one.

No, of course not; but the detail was valuable. Would she say from the robber's gait, that he had ever suffered amputation of the toes or heels, on account of frostbites? Did he have a cough? If so, was it an asthmatic cough? He, the sheriff, knew of a grocer in his town who had an asthmatic cough, and perhaps he was the criminal.

Miss Nelly thought there had been no frostbites, and she had taken no notice of a cough of any sort or kind. She would go over the incidents in her mind again, and if she could recall a cough or a frostbite, the news should at once be forwarded by telephone.

Mr. Strothers was thankful—so thankful. He intended to devote all his life to the capture of the red-handed man pursued, and anything in the way of a clew would call again and let her know how the case progressed.

It was a week later that the sheriff made good his word. He told Miss Nelly on the quiet that he had had three deacons, two elders, one minister, two poets and a doctor under surveillance, but couldn't say that any one of them was guilty.

Could she remember whether the robber wore a celluloid or linen collar? Were his finger-nails polished or only scraped? When he came rushing out of the place did he give utterance to any remark—an appeal to his aged mother—a profane ejaculation—an expression of surprise that any one had bottles to waste?

Miss Nelly had been wanting to laugh for some time. Now she giggled and added: "Mr. Strothers, do you really believe you will ever catch my robber?"

"Well, n-n-n-no," he slowly replied, as he stroked his chin. "No, Miss Hampton, I do not. If I catch you instead I shall be a very happy man."

And it was not long before Miss Nelly Hampton resigned from the telephone business for a better situation.

Cost of a Peerage.

Few persons realize what a costly thing it is to be made a peer. Take Lord Gladstone, for instance, who received his title only recently. For the stamp duties, crown office fees and home office fees he was charged just close to $2,500, which is less than many have to pay, for a viscount is only the fourth degree of the British peerage, the first being a duke, whose rank is inferior only to princes of the royal blood.

But the duties and fees are not all. There are the robes, coronet and cap and the robes, coronet and jewels which the viscount must buy for his wife. The robes of a viscount are the same as an earl's, with the exception that he has only two and a half rows of ermine; his cap is the same, and the golden circle of his coronet is surmounted by 16 silver balls. The robe of a viscountess has two and a half inches of miniver and two and a half bars of ermine, a yard and a quarter train, while the coronet is the same as her husband's.

A new earl, on the other hand, has to pay about $2,400 in stamp and other fees; a marquis about $3,500, and a duke well over $4,000.

Mr. Ivor Guest, who was created a baron at the same time as Mr. Gladstone was created a peer, got off with a payment of only a little more than $1,800. His State robes consist of only two rows of ermine; in other respects they are the same as those of other peers. Lord Roberts had a pretty steep bill to meet when he was made an earl. His stamp duties and other things ran up to exactly $8,500, a charge to which he strongly objected at first till the cause was explained to him. The reason was that, having no son to succeed him, he wished to have what is called "a special remainder" to his daughters, and all extras" of this sort have to be paid for.

Then, in addition to all the fees and other expenses already mentioned, the new peer, before he can take his seat in the house of lords, has to pay the license for the coronet on his carriage and note paper, which runs into a few more dollars a year.

She Was Interested.

"Here," remarked the enlightened guide at Plymouth Rock, "is where the Pilgrims landed."

"Dear me, how interesting!" cried the woman tourist from Cincinnati. "And will you kindly point the direction the Pilgrims took when they made their progress? Bunyan tells all about it in his book, but I've forgotten nearly everything he said."

An Honest Confession.

"I killed two birds with one stone this morning," he remarked.

"That's more than I could do," she rejoined. "I don't believe I could even hit one bird with a dozen stones."

J. P.

Those suffering from weakness and lack of vigor should take JUVEN PILLS. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. Made by its originators, C. I. HOOD CO., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, LOWELL, MASS. (Z)

Things She Knew.

"Anyway," said the pretty widow, "you evidently know a thing or two."

"Yes, and then some," rejoined the innocent maid. "There are four or five dudes among my acquaintances."

Every Lady Read This.

Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhœa, Displacements, Painful Periods, Uterine and Ovarian troubles. It cured me in one month. It is a simple, harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one having the recipe. I will send it free to every suffering sister who writes to me. Address Mrs. A. Hudnut South Bend, Indiana.

Bigger and Bigger.

"Here, boy, take that screen away from the window."

"Please, sir, that ain't a screen. The stenographer's got a new way o' dressin' her hair, sir."

An Honest Doctor

Remarked to his patient who had been cured by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound after his efforts had failed, "Mrs. Weber, I do not believe in patent medicines, but I will say that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is the best medicine ever discovered for women. Continue to use it." This is another link in the long chain of evidence to prove the reliability of this standard medicine for women.

These candy tablets do just as much as salts or calomel. But Cascarets never callous the bowels. They never create a continuous need, as harsh cathartics do. Take one just as soon as the trouble appears, and in an hour its over.

Vest-pocket box, 10 cents—at drug-stores. 855
Each tablet of the genuine is marked C C C.

SPORTING GOODS. Dice and Cards a specialty. Cat. Free. B. L. Smythe Co., Newark, Mo.

GENUINE photographs; also books. Send stamp for description and price list. A. Ord Co., Council Bluffs, Ia.

25 Artistic Post Cards, the kind that pleases. Geo. B. Allen, Bound Brook, New Jersey. 10c

SPORTING GOODS Cards, Dice, etc. Catalog free. G. LEE & CO., Salida, Colo.

50 POSTCARD VIEWS, all kinds some in gold, 10c Stewart, B 619, Providence, R. I.

4 Beautiful Postcards, 15c.; 12 real pictures of Beautiful Girls, 35c.; set of real Chromos of lovely women, $1.00. Paris Art Co., Albion, Mich.

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SPANISH Needles, Rods & Books, for locating Gold, Silver and Hidden Treasures. Fully Guaranteed. Booklet Free. Address, P. & M. AGENCY, 16 New St., Palmyra, Pa.

MENDING TISSUE. The Wonder of the Age. No sewing or darning. Repairs clothing, silk, satin, cotton goods, ribbons, fabrics of all kinds, kid gloves, mackintoshes, umbrellas, parasols, stockings, etc. Package, postpaid, 10 cents; three packages, 25 cents. Address PENN PUBLISHING CO. PARNASSUS, PA.

POULTRY PAPER FREE

COMMERCIAL POULTRY, a journal devoted to the culture of poultry. Issued monthly. Every number contains valuable information for poultrymen. Its articles are prepared by men who have made a success of raising poultry. They tell the reader, in these articles, how to produce the best results with the smallest expenditure. Don't take our word for this. Send for a sample copy and see for yourself. Write to Commercial Poultry Co., Dept. 23, Marseilles, Ill.

WHY SUFFER

The Dangers of Varicocele?

I found the cure sixteen years ago. Safe, Sure, Painless. Stops losses, restores vigor. Varicocele dethrones health and vitality. My book explains the symptoms and cure. SENT FREE. My specialty is Varicocele, Stricture, Urinary and Chronic Diseases, both sexes. Hospital accommodations; highest references. Consultation Free. Address C. ALLAN ROWE M. D. 60 NIAGARA ST., F., BUFFALO, N. Y.

MEN ONLY

CACTI SALVE Relieves Debility. Restores Vitality. Banishes Weakness

Renews sprightliness and vigor.

Cacti Salve is an outwardly applied salve. Has only to be gently rubbed in to benefit. *One application positively proves its value. Makes the weak strong and the strong stronger.* This is the original and only Cacti Salve, and is sent to all parts of the world. $1.00 a box. 3 boxes $2.00. Sealed sample 10c. silver.

"Your money back if it fails to benefit."

C. Cacti Co. 25 Third Av., New York City.

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We will put your name on them free. The greatest novelty of the novelty age.

Have you a Cabinet Photo or a postcard? If so why not have some Stamp Photos made. They will be perfect reproductions of the photo you send. They are also perforated and gummed, just like a postage stamp. We will offer them to you to introduce them at

One Cent Each

IN LOTS OF 100 ONLY.

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W. C. Watkins & Co., Box 1505, Pittsburg, Pa.

$3.50 RECIPE CURES WEAK MEN---FREE

Send Name and Address Today —You Can Have It Free and Be Strong and Vigorous.

I have in my possession a prescription for nervour debility, lack of vigor, weakened manhood, failing memory and lame back, brought on by excesses, unnatural drains, or the follies of youth, that has cured so many worn and nervous men right in their own homes—without any additional help or medicine—that I think every man who wishes to regain his manly power and virility, quickly and quietly, should have a copy. So I have determined to send a copy of the prescription free of charge, in a plain, ordinary sealed envelope to any man who will write me for it.

This prescription comes from a physician who has made a special study of men and I am convinced it is the surest-acting combination for the cure of deficient manhood, and vigor failure ever put together.

I think I owe it to my fellow man to send them a copy in confidence so that any man anywhere who is weak and discouraged with repeated failures may stop drugging himself with harmful patent medicines, secure what I believe is the quickest-acting restorative, upbuilding, SPOT-TOUCHING remedy ever devised, and so cure himself at home quietly and quickly. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. E. Robinson, 3791 Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send you a copy of this splendid recipe in a plain ordinary envelope free of charge. A great many doctors would charge $3.00 to $5.00 for merely writing out a prescription like this—but I send it entirely free.

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IN AUTOMOBILE BUSINESS

Chauffeurs, Automobile Salesmen, Demonstrators and Repairmen are in big demand everywhere. The field is new, work pleasant, and anyone can learn. We teach you in 10 weeks of study during spare time to become thoroughly efficient. Our course of instruction by mail is simple, practical, and very interesting. Besides we assist you to secure a good position.

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Don't miss this offer. Send us a postal today
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The Original Automobile School
Chauffeurs and competent men supplied owners and garages.

FUTURE I predict love, business, success or trouble. Birth date and 25c. Prof. G. T. Rhaphel, Binghamton, N.Y.

TAPE-WORM EXPELLED WITH HEAD. WRITE FOR BOOKLET. BYRON FIELD & CO. 182 STATE ST. CHICAGO, ILL.

$25 WEEKLY and expenses to men and women to collect names, distribute samples and advertise. Steady work. C. H. EMERY, E31, Chicago, Ill.

MOTHERS Bed Wetting cured. 25 cent package free. C. H. Rowan Drug Co., Dept. 62, P.O. Drawer 794, Chicago, Ill.

GOLD, Silver and Hidden Treasures can be located by the aid of our instruments. Send 2c for catalogue of rods and books. Miners' Supply Company, Dept. B, Palmyra, Penna.

5 Fine Post Cards FREE
Send only 2c stamp and receive 5 colored Gold and Embossed Cards FREE, to introduce postcard offer. Capital Card Co., Dept. 62, Topeka, Kan.

HYPNOTISM
Easily learned by mail. A secret. Not a gift. NO FAKE. Small cost. SUCCESS GUARANTEED. Particulars FREE.
C. WM. RUSSELL, Dept. 33, Westchester, N.Y.

BASEBALL CURVER Worn on the hand it aids in giving the ball a rapid whirling motion thus causing a wide curve. So small it is not noticed and they all wonder where those AWFUL curves come from. Send for a curver today if you want to be a crack pitcher and fan out the batters. Price 25c with directions for throwing all curves. CURVER CO., Box 1174 Brady, Neb.

GIVEN for selling 12 sheets NEW MUSIC at 10c each.

(regular price is 50c), return $1.20 when sold and we'll send these 4 beautiful gold laid Rings FREE
4 SUN CO., FREDERICK, Md.

MORPHINE
and other drug habits are successfully treated by HABITINA. For hypodermic or internal use. Sample sent to any drug habitue by mail, in plain wrapper. Regular price $2.00. **Free**
DELTA CHEMICAL COMPANY,
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WANTED SOLDIERS' HOMESTEADS Union Soldiers who homesteaded some land, but less than 160 acres before June 23, 1874, are entitled to additional rights even though entry was relinquished or abandoned. If soldier is dead, widow or heirs have his rights.
I Pay Spot Cash for These Claims.
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Pimples, Blackheads Red Nose, Skin Eruptions

and other facial blemishes positively cured quickly by PIMPOLENE—a marvelous remedy that never fails. Soothing to irritated skin and clears the complexion in a night. There is nothing more embarrassing to persons of refinement than pimples and blackheads. They are disgusting to look at and no one knows this any better than those who are afflicted. You need not suffer any longer if you take this wonderful remedy. Acts like magic. $2 per jar; guaranteed or money refunded. Trial is FREE.
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Dept. A, 71 Dearborn Street, Chicago.

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HELP WANTED

WANTED—Railway Mail Clerks, Clerks at Washington, D. C., City Carriers and Postoffice Clerks. High salaries. Short hours. Annual vacations. Steady work. Common education sufficient. Examinations announced everywhere July 15th. Preparation free. Write immediately for schedule. Franklin Institute, Dept. U 31, Rochester, N. Y.

ASTROLOGER

YOUR FORTUNE TOLD. Past and future; love, marriage, business, etc. Send birthdate and 6c. F. Guy, Box 106, Longueuil, P. Que.

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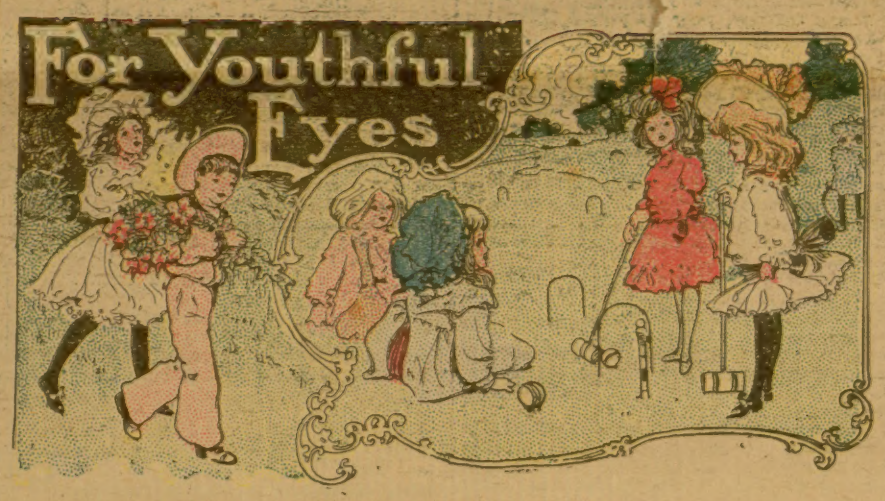
FARMS WANTED. We can turn a quick sale for you as we are in close touch with buyers everywhere. Let us show you how to save agent's commissions. Or, if you want to buy property of any kind, anywhere, write us. American Investment Association, 815 Palace Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn.

OLD COINS

$7.75 PAID for rare date 1853 quarters; $20 for a $1. Keep all money dated before 1880, and send 10c at once for new illustrated Coin Value Book, 4x7. It may mean your fortune. C. F. Clarke Co., Desk 2, Le Roy, N. Y.



HURRAH FOR THE FLAG.

There are many flags in many lands,
  There are flags of every hue;
But there is no flag, however grand,
  Like our own "Red, White and Blue."

I know where the prettiest colors are;
  And I'm sure if I only knew
How to get them here I could make a flag
  Of glorious "Red, White, and Blue."

I would cut a piece from an evening sky,
  Where the stars were shining through,
And use it just as it was on high,
  For my stars and field of blue.

Then I'd want a part of a fleecy cloud,
  And some red from a rainbow bright;
I'd put them together side by side,
  For my stripes of red and white.

We shall always love the "Stars and Stripes,"
  And we mean to be ever true
To this land of ours and the dear old flag,
  The "Red, the White, and the Blue."

Then hurrah for the flag, our country's flag,
  Its stripes and its white stars, too;
There is no flag in any land
  Like our own "Red, White, and Blue!"

A Pig Who Caused War.

Did you ever hear about the pig who caused the War of 1812, which assured to the United S[illegible] the independence which [illegible]ew the War of the Revolution? It [illegible]surd, doesn't it, that a pig should play [illegible] important a part in the history of the nation? Yet, if we can believe the story as it comes to us, this actually happened.

In Providence, R. I., there lived two citizens who had a serious quarrel because the pig which belonged to one of them kept breaking into the garden belonging to the other. This occurred so often that at last the aggrieved party complained to his neighbor who owned the pig, and suggested that he repair his pigsty. Whereat piggy's owner said: "Why don't you mend your fences?" By and by the owner of the garden killed the pig with a pitchfork and put the dead body in the sty, where presently its owner found it.

Now it happened that both men belonged to the Federalist party, which favored politically Great Britain, and did not want America to declare war against that country, even though American seamen were being impressed, American vessels were being stopped on the high seas, and many indignities were being committed against the United States by the British. But the Democratic party wanted war.

The election district in which the two neighbors lived was about equally divided between Democrats and Federalists, but the latter party had always succeeded in carrying the election. But in 1811 the owner of the garden ran for the Legislature on the Federalist ticket. And his neighbor, who had always before voted that ticket, now, on account of anger over the death of his pig, voted instead for the Democratic candidate. When the votes were counted it was found that the Democrat had been elected by a majority of one.

When the United States legislator took his seat his first duty was to vote for a United States Senator. Because he was a Democrat he voted for the candidate of his party, who also was elected by a majority of one. When this Senator took his place in the Senate the question of war with Great Britain was pending, and after a long and bitter discussion the matter came to a vote. The Democrats voted for war, and the Federalists against it. The former won the day, and war was declared—again by a majority of one.

And this is the way that a pig may be said to have caused the War of 1812.

The True Patriot.

He loves his country, but he loves still more the kingdom of God.

He cares too much for his country to uphold her in any wrong.

He does not reserve his patriotism until he has a chance to die for his country; he lives for her.

He does not urge the selection of the best men for candidates, and then refuse to serve when called upon, though at the cost of time and money and inclination.

He does not vote for bad men, and then plead that he did not know they were bad. He takes time to investigate the character of candidates.

The Naughty Squirrel.

There was once a boy who had a squirrel. It was a nice gray squirrel and its name was Peter. When it was a little squirrel it had been naughty. It used to do all the naughty things that its mother told it that it mustn't and a lot more that it made up itself. It wouldn't get up in the morning and it wouldn't go to bed at night, and it wouldn't do anything anybody told it to, just for that! And its mother and its aunts and its uncles said, "Peter, we're ashamed of you!"

But that didn't do any good. And its father said: "Peter!!" with two exclamation points, but that didn't do any good either.

And then its mother shut it up in a hole in the tree and fed it on sawdust for three weeks, and at the end of that time it came out of the hole just as bad as ever.

One day Peter's mother said to him: "Run up to the nest and bring me my glasses." And Peter said:

"I won't! What did you say, mother?"

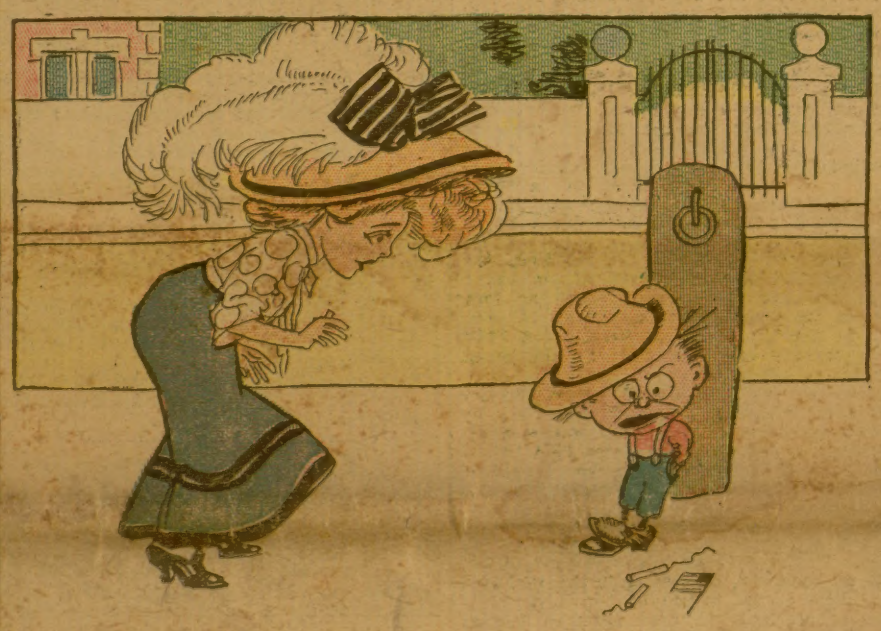
And his mother said: "Peter, run up to the nest and get me my glasses."

And again Peter said, "I won't!"

Then his father said: "Peter!" And Peter ran up the tree as fast as he could. But, instead of going to the nest, he ran out on the tipmost end of the tallest branch and danced there. And he waved his tail defiantly and shouted, "I won't! I won't! I won't!"

He made so much noise saying it that a party of boys going through the wood heard him and came to see what he was talking about. And when those boys saw the squirrel on the end of a branch, one of them got a sack and he tied it at the end of a long stick and climbed up the tree with it. Now, the tree stood all by itself, so there was nowhere for the little squirrel to run to, so when the boy came creeping along the branch as far as it would bear his weight, Peter couldn't escape, and the first thing he knew he found himself shaken off into the sack.

So the boy took it home and put it in a cage, and then it had to be good.



"Why, little boy! Where's your patriotism?"

"Huh! If all you had to celebrate wit was two one-cent firecrackers and a penny flag, you'd feel about as patriotic as a homesick Chinaman!"

THE LOST KISS.

By James Whitcomb Riley.

I put by the half-written poem,
  While the pen idly trailed in my hand,
Writes on, "Had I words to complete it,
  Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"
But the little bare feet on the stairway,
  And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall
And the eerie low lisp on the silence,
  Cry up to me over it all.

So I gather it up—where was broken
  The tear-faded thread on my theme,
Telling how, as one night I sat writing,
  A fairy broke in on my dream,
A little inquisitive fairy—
  My own little girl with the gold
Of the sun in her hair, and the dewy
  Blue eyes of the fairest of old.

'Twas the dear little girl that I scolded—
  "For was it a moment like this,"
I said, "when she knew I was busy,
  To come romping in for a kiss?
Come rowdying up from her mother
  And clamoring there at my knee
For 'One 'ittue kiss for my dolly
  And one 'ittle uzzer for me?'"

God pity the heart that repelled her
  And the cold hand that turned her away!
And take from the lips that denied her
  This answerless prayer of today!
Take, Lord, from mem'ry forever
  That pitiful sob of despair,
And the patter and trip of the bare little feet
  And the one piercing cry on the stair.

I put by the half-written poem,
  While the pen, idly trailed in my hand,
Writes on, "Had I words to complete it,
  Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"
But the little bare feet on the stairway,
  And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall,
And the eerie low lisp on the silence,
  Cry up to me over it all.

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Bobby—Mamma, my stomach says it is dinner time.

Mamma—What does the clock say?

Bobby (after looking at the clock)—It says my stomach's five minutes fast.

—

Small Tommy—My pa's awful smart.

Little Elsie—What does he do?

Small Tommy—He's a mechanic and makes locomotives.

Little Elsie—That's nothing. My pa's a commuter and makes two trains every day.

—

One day small Madge heard her mother say there wasn't a match in the house. "Never mind, mamma," said the little miss; "when I say my prayers tonight I'll ask God to send us a box."

"But why ask God for matches?" queried the surprise parent.

"'Cause," answered Madge, "Aunt Jennie says matches are made in Heaven."

—

Small Edna—Mamma, how old is our cow?

Mamma—She's 4 years old.

Small Edna—Why, I'm 5, mamma. That cow's big enough to be 50.

—

Teacher—What class of birds does the hawk belong to, Tommy?

Tommy—Birds of prey.

Teacher—Now, Johnny, to what class does the quail belong?

Johnny—Birds on toast.

—

Mamma—You can have this piece of cake, Elmer, but that's all you'll get.

Little Elmer—All right, mamma; but you'll be sorry.

Mamma—Why will I be sorry?

Little Elmer—When I starve to death my funeral will cost more than a dozen cakes.

JACK'S FOURTH.

ONE was Jack's mother's lively son,
  Who with the sun arose,
TWO minutes took he to put on
  His necessary clothes,
THREE were the leaps which carried him
  From his room down the stairs.
FOUR named this day when he risked limb
  To possible repairs.
FIVE were the pennies that he spent
  For noisy celebration.
SIX crackers fired he ere he went
  To bed in perturbation.
SEVEN burns and blisters nursed he there
  And wished he hadn't done it.
EIGHT days he spent in doctor's care
  From that day he begun it.
NINE were the dollars of the fee
  For curing Jack of pain.
NAUGHT seconds spent in thought will be
  Ere Jack does it again.

A Remarkable Library.

A gentleman a good many years ago built a fine house and wanted to have a good library, and so this is the remarkable order he sent to a book buyer:

"I want six feet of theology, same quantity of metaphysics and near a yard of classical [illegible] in the folio."

GETTING READY.

Red-coated crackers primly stand,
With wheels and things on either hand:
And expectation thrills the land.

The strident Fourth will soon be due,
And boys of every age and hue
Are "saving up" to see it through.

A Queer Musician.

If any boy or girl, who has a garden, and is not afraid of creeping, crawling things, will take a snail and place it on an ordinary pane of glass, he or she will hear something amusing when the snail begins to crawl.